



A RECORD OF A MORTAL'S JOURNEY TO IMMORTALITY

BOOK 03

Wang Yu

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A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality

(凡人修仙传)

by

Wang Yu

(忘语)

Synopsis

A poor and ordinary boy from a village joins a minor sect in Jiang Hu and becomes an Unofficial Disciple by chance.

How will Han Li, a commoner by birth, establish a foothold for himself in his sect?

With his mediocre aptitude, how will he successfully traverse the path of cultivation and become an immortal?

This is a story of an ordinary mortal who, against all odds, clashes with devilish demons and the ancient celestials in order to find his own path to immortality.

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English Translation by DoubledD and GandalfsSocks @ [Gravity Tales](#)

Translation Edit by Koreanmist, Asvare @ [Gravity Tales](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

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Volume 3: Invasion Of The Devilish Dao

Chapter 172: Choice

At the northern region of the Jian Province, at some desert mountain at the border of the State of Yue and the State of Yuan Wu, stood several tens of yellow-clothed people of various height. Their clothes were fluttering with the wind, and their ages had nothing in common; there were some who were old and gray-haired with a face full of wrinkles, near the end of their lives, as well as smooth-skinned, white-teethed and red-lipped juveniles who had yet to enter adulthood. They all stood silently in rows.

At the front was naturally an imposing old man. With his hands behind his back, he motionlessly looked toward the sky, lost in thought. There were four men and one woman behind him, each with a respectful bearing. Among them was that Martial Uncle Wang who had brought Han Li to enter the sect. He currently had a solemn expression.

Behind those five people, there were two orderly rows of yellow-clothed disciples, all with different expressions. A few were nervous, others were either ill at ease, unconcerned, or even glancing all around. There were a few smiling silently, not showing their true intentions.

At the end of the last row, there was a common dark-skinned youth with lowered eyes. He had been looking at the edge of his feet from the very beginning. He didn't dare to shift his gaze in the slightest, seeming unusually shy.

However, none of these people knew that this yellow boy was silently cursing with resentment.

This youth who was different from the others was Han Li. The group of yellow-clothed individuals were the Yellow Maple Valley's disciples who were about to join the Trial by Blood and Fire.

Han Li ultimately decided to participate in this almost certain-death excursion. The matter of the two Foundation Establishment Pills was a hapless joke.

A month before, after Han Li found the method to take the Foundation Establishment Pill from Wu Feng, he was greatly shocked.

It turned out that those taking the Foundation Establishment Pill must enter seclusion for three months and must use up all of the medicinal power before exiting. Otherwise, the medicinal power would scatter, greatly reducing the pill's efficacy. That was why finding out whether or not one succeeded in reaching Foundation Establishment required several months.

Having to wait for such a long time greatly discouraged Han Li.

His original plan after acquiring the two Foundation Establishment Pills was to first take the pills and then see whether or not he had to participate in the Trial by Fire. If he were lucky enough to reach Foundation Establishment, then he definitely wouldn't go to such a dangerous region. After all, only one in four survived; it was truly too frightening.

If he failed after taking the pills, then it would be imperative that he would enter the forbidden area. If two or three Foundation Establishment Pills wouldn't do, then he would refine three, four or even more pills. He was convinced that his aptitude was far too lacking, and only by taking several Foundation Establishment Pills would he be certain to enter Foundation Establishment.

However with the restriction that he must be secluded for three months after taking the pill, Han Li's plan was thrown into disarray, causing him to face an awkward situation where he [couldn't get everything he wanted](#).

(TL: "鱼与熊掌不可兼得"; literal meaning: you can't have both the fish and the bear's paw)

Now, he had to either take the Foundation Establishment Pill and completely give up on entering the forbidden area, or he could temporarily put away the Foundation Establishment Pill and wait until after the Trial by Blood and Fire to consume the pills. It was impossible to have the best of both worlds.

After pondering this for almost half a month, Han Li felt that with regards to his terrible aptitude, even if he were to consume both of the Foundation Establishment Pills, his chances of entering Foundation Establishment were still quite low, so he could not give up on the Trial by Blood and Fire.

Actually, it wasn't like Han Li hadn't considered waiting five more years to participate in the next Trial by Blood and Fire. At that time, even if he failed to enter Foundation Establishment, his Eternal Spring Arts would have definitely reached its peak. As such, he would have a much greater ability to defend himself.

However, not long after Han Li thought of this, the Yellow Maple Valley's upper echelon made a declaration that greatly shocked the cultivation world of the State of Yue, causing this idea of his to vanish into thin air.

The details were: five years from now, the forbidden area of the Trial of Blood and Fire would be placed under a temporarily sixty-year seal. During this time, the Seven Great Sects would work together and forbid anyone from entering and gathering medicine.

Sealing the forbidden area temporarily was not a rare affair. Almost every three to four hundred years, the Seven Great Sects would do this.

Because the forbidden area was often opened, the Spiritual Qi within would leak in great quantities. The appearance and growth of spiritual medicines would also suffer as a result. This temporarily seal was to allow the density of Spiritual Qi to return to normal levels.

However, although the Seven Great Sects adopted this measure, the spiritual medicines of the forbidden area were still sparse year after year and were increasingly difficult to find. Those particular spiritual medicines required to refine pills were especially rare.

According to a deduction of some knowledgeable expert from the Seven Great Sects, if one truly wanted to restore the spiritual medicines within the forbidden Area to regular quantities, they must seal the area for no less than a full millennium. This

temporarily seal was nothing more than a postponement of the eventual exhaustion of the forbidden Area's spiritual medicines. After all, the growth of spiritual medicines wasn't a matter of merely one or two days.

Despite the actual circumstances within the forbidden area, nobody was able to deny or confirm this conjecture. However, the leaders of the Seven Great Sects were incapable of such a painful decision.

The quantity of Foundation Establishment Pills was closely related to the rise and fall of their sects.

If there was a shortage of these pills lasting fifty to sixty years, the Seven Great Sects would merely suffer some superficial damage. However, if several hundred or even a thousand years passed without Foundation Establishment Pills, then not just the Seven Great Sects, but also the entire cultivation world of the State of Yue would be confronted with a life or death crisis.

After all, an area without Foundation Establishment cultivators, could that be still be called a "cultivation world"? If the time came, the cultivation clans and rogue cultivators would all depart the State of Yue and look to survive elsewhere. At that time, the Seven Great Sects would not be an exception.

As a result, although they knew that frequently opening the forbidden area was a folly equivalent to killing the chicken that laid the eggs, the Seven Great Sects could not help but do so.

They could only hope that before the spiritual medicines of the forbidden area were truly extinguished, they could produce other spiritual medicines to replace them.

This caused the Great Sects' Core Formation experts, even those Nascent Soul eccentrics, to go out of their way to look for another source of spiritual medicines or to find another solution to prevent their respective sects from falling.

Naturally, Han Li could not have known this. But with this new information, there was no way Han Li would dare to wait five more years for the next Trial by Blood and Fire.

Even slow-minded individuals would realize that when the forbidden area opened in five years, it would unconditionally be a storm of blood. Each of the Great Sects' elite disciples would be put forth in order to scavenge for the last time before the forbidden area was sealed away. If Han Li did not participate in this Trial by Fire, then he would be bringing about his own destruction.

Even if this announcement caused the upcoming trip to the forbidden area to have greater troubles and more desperate battles, regardless of this, the next was certain to be even more bloody.

As for the folly of participating in the Trial by Blood and Fire fifty years later, he didn't even think of it.

By then he would have passed optimal age to enter Foundation Establishment. Even if he were able to barely enter Foundation Establishment, he would certainly not be able to tread the path of

cultivation for much longer. This was not the outcome Han Li desired.

With that way in mind, Han Li enlisted to participate in the medicine-gathering group and waived his life away. Unexpectedly, the appearance of that Martial Uncle Wang caused Han Li to feel greatly surprised and somewhat regretful.

When Martial Uncle Wang saw Han Li, he was even more surprised.

On one hand, he was greatly astonished that this new disciple would participate in the Trial by Blood and Fire. On the other hand, he almost couldn't believe how far Han LI's cultivation had advanced. With Han Li's aptitudes, how could he progress with his cultivation from the ninth layer to the eleventh layer within such a short period of time? This was far too shocking.

If Han Li were an outstandingly talented disciple, then it wouldn't be strange; it would be more strange if he hadn't reached the eleventh layer by now. However, he had personally tested Han Li's false spiritual roots. How could he have cultivated so fast?

With regards to his spiritual roots, for Han Li to enter the sect at the ninth layer was already extraordinary.

Usually, only by being bestowed magic power by an Elder and frequently consuming a few spiritual medicines, along with diligent and bitter cultivation, could someone be able to achieve this. However, with Han Li currently standing before him with a

cultivation base at the eleventh layer, he was incomparably shocked.

Since Martial Uncle Wang was doubtful, he impolitely pulled Han Li to the side and tested his attributes once more. The result was the same as before and stomped any suspicions of mutated spiritual roots.

This caused Martial Uncle Wang to be at a loss.

Chapter 173: The Gathering

Han Li responded “I don’t know” to all of the questions, and insisted that his cultivation today was all because of his hard work. As for how he was able to cultivate and improve at this alarming rate, Han Li used a mysterious story that he had previously prepared about how he mistakenly ate a magical fruit when he was a child. He told this to Martial Uncle Wang, then blamed everything onto the magical fruit. He prepared this excuse specifically to handle this kind of situation.

Han Li knew that a believable lie should consist of seventy percent truth and thirty percent falsehood, so the magical fruit that he describe wasn’t solely from his imagination. It was a fruit that had been rumored for thousands of years: the Immortal Clan’s “Dragon Scale Fruit”. It was said that people who ate it could be reborn and could soar in the sky. As for whether or not it truly existed, there was no way for Han Li to find out, but regardless, no one had ever actually eaten it.

As soon as this Martial Uncle Wang, who had read many books, heard Han Li’s description of the magical fruit, his eyes brightened up. He actually found an ancient book from somewhere called the “Record of Wondrous Objects”, and found an article regarding the “Dragon Scale Fruit” for Han Li to identify.

As things had gotten to this point, Han Li would naturally admit it with ease. Amazed, Martial Uncle Wang made a “tsk-tsk” sound.

Han Li also told him that once he picked the fruit, the plant’s original roots immediately withered away and died. That way,

there would absolutely be no more of this fruit even if they went back to the original location. This was to make sure the other party would not try asking around in an attempt to find more of the fruit for himself, thereby completely putting an end to the story.

As for whether or not this person would be greedy, believed it to be true, or tried to go elsewhere to find another such fruit, it was none of his business. Let him busy himself with it!

Han Li knew very clearly that even though Martial Uncle Wang acted as if he completely believed him, and even though Han Li had answered all of his questions, there was no way of knowing how much he actually believed him.

The other party was probably in half belief and half doubt, in between trusting and not trusting. So with this Martial Uncle Wang, Han Li should avoid and hide from him if possible in the future, as well as pay more attention in case the other party got suspicious.

But Han Li believed that as long as he could successfully enter Foundation Establishment, then his identity would be quite different. Even if Martial Uncle Wang still had doubts in his heart, he wouldn't provoke him that easily. After all, the cultivation world spoke with strength!

Finally, Han Li brushed off the questions about his own cultivation. As for Martial Uncle Wang, it was unclear whether or not he was apologetic about all the questionings from before, but he didn't make things difficult for Han Li at the registration. He helped him through all the paperwork very easily, and warned him

about some precautions he should prepare prior to entering the forbidden area.

Han Li gave a mouthful of thanks, then said goodbye and left.

After he returned, he greeted the little old man and temporarily stopped his work at the medical herb garden so that he could prepare for the Trial by Blood and Fire without any distractions.

Hearing this, the little old man was silent for a while. He used a strange expression that said “You’re already dead” and kept on staring at Han Li. This made Han Li’s heart uneasy for a long time.

But what surprised him was that before this Senior Martial Uncle Ma left, he gave Han Li two bottles of medicine without any hesitation. He said coldly, “One bottle for internal use, and the other for external use.” He then flew away on his flying magic tool with an indifferent expression.

This gesture slightly warmed Han Li’s heart.

After the past two years of spending time together, he understood that although the little old man’s temperament was eccentric, he was a person with a cold appearance and a warm heart. He was just somewhat absorbed in the art of medicine creation. He was being treated with warmth now, which meant that Senior Martial Uncle Ma already saw him as his nephew, making Han Li feel moved.

Three days before entering the forbidden area, Martial Uncle Wang finally sent Han Li a letter, urging him to gather at the meeting hall to get ready to go.

When Han Li arrived, the disciples who registered for the Trial by Fire and Blood were all gathered there, silently judging each other.

There were more than ten thousand disciples from the whole Yellow Maple Valley that were of Qi Condensation. Han Li naturally wouldn't know all of them, but there was still one woman that Han Li couldn't be more familiar with. Not only did Han Li know this woman, he had seen and even touched her whole body: the "Junior Martial Sister Chen" who got drugged and almost raped by "Martial Brother Lu".

Speaking of which, after "Martial Brother Lu" had been killed by Han Li, it caused a small commotion in the Yellow Maple Valley. Even though this person hadn't even reached Foundation Establishment, he was after all an owner of mutated spiritual roots, making him a low-level disciple that the sect's upper echelon paid close attention to.

As for "Junior Martial Sister Chen", after she came back, for an unknown reason, she didn't discuss what had happened on that night to anyone and refused to speak of the matter.

As a result, the "Martial Brother Lu" who had disappeared for a long time was treated as a missing person. After contacting different disciples and searching within the sect without getting any results, this matter was slowly dropped.

These types of people disappeared from the valley all the time. It's not like similar situations had never occurred before. "Martial Brother Lu" wasn't the first, and he definitely wouldn't be the last.

After the initial reaction period had passed, no one in Yellow Maple Valley ever mentioned "Martial Brother Lu" again, as if he never even existed. This situation put Han Li at ease, but he also felt a cold chill.

It was expected that most cultivators were people who restrained their desires. If one day Han Li himself disappeared, the reactions within the sect would presumably be not as overwhelmed by the reactions they were having now! Most likely in the blink of an eye, he would be completely forgotten, and no one would waste their time or energy trying to inquire about his whereabouts.

Ever since he entered the sect, he had absolutely made the right decision by maintaining a low profile and a cautious attitude.

After all, the road of cultivation was very long, so there was a high possibility for accidents to happen. If Han Li attracted more attention to himself or did stupid things to show off, then a low level cultivator who didn't even have a background and support like him would be squashed to death by a stronger existence at any moment on the long road of cultivation. The possibility of stepping on the road of cultivation in another life would be so low it was almost nonexistent.

Han Li originally didn't believe in reincarnation that much, but

ever since he had come in contact with the cultivation world, he had become less doubtful.

The attitude of “Junior Martial Sister Chen” was obviously different from before. Han Li was not sure if it was because she was affected by her lover’s betrayal, but she didn’t have any makeup on. She seemed cold but elegant, and her whole body was emitting an atmosphere that demanded strangers to stay away. During this time a few young guys tried to talk to her because they were attracted by her beauty, but they were all shot down in defeat.

It wasn’t because the men were cheap. This woman’s cold and arrogant expression not only did not reduce her beauty, but it also added a bit more mysterious charm to it. It made all the surrounding male disciples try to sneak a peek at her. This kind of charm was even more attractive than the image of a timid, lovable little woman that she had when she was with that “Martial Brother Lu” before.

But after Han Li saw this, he was annoyed.

There was no question that another woman who despised men was born into this world. After experiencing the betrayal of her lover, it probably won’t be easy for this woman to open her heart to another man. She probably even decided to grow old and die alone.

This “Junior Martial Sister Chen” didn’t recognize Han Li. Han Li deliberately walked in front of her a few times, but he only received a cold expression in response. She obviously saw him as one of the people who was trying to show off to her.

Han Li was relieved. The psychedelic power of the Joyful Meeting Pill really was strong. This woman didn't remember him at all. Because of this, the last thing for him to worry about was completely eliminated.

But when he thought about how passionate and desirable her naked body looked that night, and then saw how cold and frozen "Junior Martial Sister Chen" looked now, Han Li's heart was filled with desire and regrets.

Speaking of which, the reason she would participate in the Trial by Blood and Fire was likely thanks to him. After losing the Foundation Establishment Pill, if this woman wanted to achieve Foundation Establishment, she would have to gamble for it just like him. After all, this trip to the forbidden area was the only fast path to getting a Foundation Establishment Pill.

The disciples who were participating in the trip to the forbidden area in the Yellow Maple Valley were truly the sect's elite, all of them strong and muscular. Just counting the disciples who reached the peak of thirteenth layer, there were as much as five or six of them.

Most of the other disciples were at the twelfth layer. "Junior Martial Sister Chen" was at the middle of the twelfth layer.

The rest of the disciples were in the eleventh layer, and there were only three of them. Besides Han Li, there was an old man whose hair was all white and a young fellow who looked sixteen or

seventeen. Seeing them made Han Li feel an uneasy chill in his heart. The three of them were probably only there to make up for the numbers and to be cannon fodder.

Following past customs, the low-level disciples who could enter the forbidden area in the Seven Great Sect could not exceed twenty-five people. The number could only be less, but not more. For the past few times, they couldn't get enough people at all. Usually they only got about ten people to participate in the Trial by Blood and Fire.

But this time, not only did the maximum number get reached, many elite disciples appeared here. This proved that this trip to the forbidden area for gathering medical herbs would definitely exceed the normal standards of the past, and the number of people who could survive would certainly be less than a quarter.

Seeing this expected scenario, Han Li, aside from cursing in his mind, was feeling completely helpless! It was no question that these elite disciples must have each been given extra incentives by the higher powers within the sect, otherwise they wouldn't have appeared here.

Chapter 174: Martial Ancestor Li

After they heard Sect Master Zhong Lingdao's encouragements, two honored disciples entered the halls with trays in their hands.

One of the trays had a gold-threaded storage pouch. The other tray had a small pile of multicolored mid-grade spirit stones. It seemed it was time to fulfill what was previously agreed. This could be considered the encouragement to fight! Han Li thought this slightly maliciously.

The mid-grade spirit stones were basically free for everyone to choose. Han Li already had an earth attribute and a fire attribute mid-grade spirit stone, so he picked a blue, water attribute spirit stone. Nobody fought him over this.

However, when spiritual tools were extracted from the storage pouch, the disciples gave cautious glances.

This storage pouch was unlike common storage pouches. It only required spiritual sense to store items instead of spiritual power. In addition, any spiritual power that was injected could later be absorbed by the items stored within. This bag also interrupted a cultivator's spiritual sense inspection. So long as one extended their hand, they would be able to take out any stored spiritual tool. As for what item they would take out in the end, it would be hard to say. They could only determine it with the feel of their hand.

This storage pouch was specialized to extract spiritual tools and had been refined precisely for this purpose. Otherwise its

practicality couldn't be compared to that of common storage pouches, of which case who would use it!?

Although it was completely filled with high-quality magic tools, defensive magic tools were rarer than offensive magic tools. Furthermore, as high-quality defensive and offensive magic tools, their characteristics were greatly different.

If one could take out a suitable magic tool, their odds of surviving the Trial by Blood and Fire were sure to slightly increase. For those disciples lacking magic tools, they would be even more meticulous.

However, Han Li did not care.

On his last trip to the city market, he swept clean the entire treasure collection that the Ten Thousand Treasures Store had been accumulated for many years and was able to obtain two magic tools of the finest quality. Not to mention the Azure Flood Dragon Banner as well as other high-quality magic tools he acquired afterwards.

To receive just another high-quality magic tool did not excite him.

When it was Han Li's turn to step forward, most of the people had already drawn a magic tool from the bag. As for what magic tool they drew, they naturally did not say and did not take them out for others to see.

Han Li extended his hand toward the pouch and randomly made a blind grab, acquiring a peculiar-looking object. His heart grew excited, and he instantly put it into his storage pouch while taking a stealthy glance. After moment of slight distraction, he immediately put it away.

At this moment, the person behind him already impatiently moved forward. When Han Li saw this, he tactfully left and returned to the place where he originally stood.

With the magic tool selection concluded, a few people came in from outside the hall. They were the many stewards Han Li saw when he first entered the sect. Martial Uncle Wang and that Old Man Ye whom Han Li truly despised were included among them.

These people all had an unusual expression. They all respectfully escorted a square-faced old man at their center. There wasn't even a single person who dared to whisper to one another.

The old man appeared fifty to sixty years old with his hair somewhat gray. However, he had a healthy red face and a spirited complexion with a pair of naturally imposing tiger eyes. With a single look, one could tell that this person was of a resolute disposition.

After his gaze swept past the disciples, Han Li immediately felt that his [five viscera and six bowels](#) had been clearly seen by this person, causing him to be overwhelmed with amazement.

The moment Great Sect Master Zhong saw this man walk in, he

hastily welcomed him as “Martial Uncle Li” with a faint trace of flattery. Seeing this, the disciples were greatly stunned.

However, the other stewards’ expressions were as usual. Not only did they lack any contempt but they also showed great envy when they saw this elder respond to Zhong Lingdao with a few words. It seemed that to have this elder respond to the words “Martial Uncle” was a seldom held honor.

As Han Li and the other unknowing young disciples were astonished at the sight before them, Sect Master Zhang introduced this elder to the crowd of disciples. The name of this “Martial Uncle Li” was a name Han Li and company had long heard of. He was one of the Core Formation Martial Ancestors that they had never seen, Martial Ancestor Li.

This trip to the forbidden area would be led by Martial Ancestor Li along with a squad of stewards, including Martial Uncle Wang.

After Sect Master Zhong’s introduction, Martial Ancestor Li very clearly and concisely said the two words “Set off”, concluding Han Li’s and the other juniors’ first encounter with him. Then he took the lead, departing from the hall.

Han Li and company were completely dumbfounded. However, they hurriedly followed closely at the stewards’ urging.

As the disciples left the hall, they inhaled a breath of cold air.

Just as they left the hall, they saw a huge brilliant silver monster over twenty Zhang long, suspended in midair. Its enormous body produced an oppressive grandeur, bringing about a feeling of suffocation. That Martial Ancestor Li was standing on top of the head of the monster and watching them with indifference.

Han Li rubbed his eyes and then carefully looked several times as his heart continued to jump. What he clearly saw was unexpectedly a seldom seen Silver Python. However, this python was truly extraordinary. Its head had an additional jet-black horn, causing it to appear ever more terrifying and malevolent.

“This is the strength of a Core Formation Expert. He’s even able to cause this demonic beast to yield and follow his orders as he pleases. This is far too incredible!” Han Li was completely convinced by this Martial Ancestor’s method.

If he were to reach Core Formation, then he would also hold such great magic power. Han Li felt all the blood in his body flow backwards from excitement.

Before he saw Martial Ancestor Li, Han Li felt that his vague and muddled path of cultivation was not clear.

But after this moment of shock, the might of this Martial Ancestor’s profoundly amazing magic gave him a clear figure to pursue on the path of cultivation, greatly securing his confidence to cultivate the path of immortality.

“Everyone, come up and stand well-behaved! My Horned Silver

Python's flight speed is far faster than your magic tools. It will only require two days to reach the destination!"

It was as if Martial Ancestor Li did not see the chaotic circumstances below him. After he lightly stroked the Silver Python's huge horn, he gave this instruction with a tranquil expression.

Like that, Han Li and company stood on the python with fear and trepidation and rushed through their journey for two days and two nights. Eventually they arrived at some nameless desert mountain.

This Martial Ancestor truly did not speak falsely. The speed of this monster's flight was truly astonishing, far greater than what the disciple's flying tools were capable of. It was only natural, as none of them had a good flying tool.

When they arrived, the crowd of disciples received a few bits of information from the stewards. This was where the sects agreed to assemble. The Seven Great Sects would assemble there and set off together to the forbidden area since the power of a sole sect or clan was not enough to enter the forbidden area.

The appointed time was tomorrow morning. However, because the forbidden area was within the borders of the Jing Province, Yellow Maple Valley was considered to be half a host. As a result, the sect arrived a day earlier and would wait for the other sects at this mountain.

Right now, the crowd of disciples could freely move. Tomorrow,

they would have to meet together and move in an orderly fashion.

Since the stewards have said as such, Han Li and the others naturally dispersed. They went about the mountain doing their own things, making a few final preparations on the eve of a great battle.

Thus, among the twenty-plus yellow-clothed disciples, there were those who sat cross-legged and honed their spirit, and others who took out their magic tools and continuously wiped them clean. There were also those who were blankly lost in thought with an appearance of deep worry.

But there were even several people who chatted as usual, filled with ease. They were completely relaxed, as if they were on a sightseeing trip. Han Li paid particular attention to these few people.

At this moment, Han Li heard the sounds of footsteps behind him, and he slightly wrinkled his brow. In order to remain inconspicuous, he deliberately chose to sit alone at an unremarkable corner. Why would someone come here?

“Junior Martial Brother Han! My humble self named Xiang salutes you! I wish to speak to Junior Martial Disciple about tomorrow’s early trip to the forbidden area! This concerns Junior Martial Brother’s life or death. Could we have a chat?”

The aged but smooth voice caused Han Li’s brows to become even more tense.

Although Han Li had not yet seen the voice's owner, Han Li could already tell that this man was crafty and could be considered untrustworthy. He immediately assumed that trouble had come to find him!

However, Han Li understood that it would be better to offend a gentleman than to offend a villain. Although he was completely unwilling, he reluctantly turned around and saw two people behind him, one old and one short.

Chapter 175: Clear Void Sect

After he clearly saw the two people's appearances, Han Li inwardly sighed. They were unexpectedly the same as him, disciples who have cultivated to the eleventh layer. One appeared old, but his eyes showed a trace of cunning. The other appeared honest and naive. It was clear that he was an inexperienced youngster.

This strange pair had sought him, causing Han Li to truly feel a bit surprised. However, Han Li faintly guessed their purpose in coming after some slight thought.

“Is there something on these Senior Martial Brother's minds?” Han Li coldly asked from courtesy. But he used an unintimate tone, undoubtedly revealing his attempt to have them retreat from an awkward situation..

Clearly, this Senior Martial Brother Xiang's face was far thicker than Han Li imagine. Not only did he not mind Han Li's thousand miles distant tone, but actually used a familiar and enthusiastic tone.

“Hehe, does Junior Martial Brother Han have a good plan for tomorrow's trip to the forbidden area? Our magic power is quite meager. It's quite possible that we will be the first to fall in a fiery melee with the other sects! Wouldn't it be better for us to negotiate and think of a countermeasure?”

When Han Li heard this, he blinked his eyes several times and

didn't speak. Nevertheless, he was completely certain of the other party's intentions. Their words were pretty close to his own guesses.

It seemed this old schemer planned to rope in a few disciples with feeble magic power and have them move and fight together, increasing security by much as well as greatly increasing their odds of survival.

However, Han Li clearly understood that this action came with both advantages and disadvantages.

If people were to concentrate in one place, the area they could search would be considerably less, greatly decreasing the amount of spiritual medicines they could find. As for how the spiritual medicines would be distributed in the end, that was also hard to say! It would probably be decided by strength.

Han Li naturally hadn't the slightest interest in an alliance. Not only would there be no advantages but he was also more than likely to be used as cannon fodder.

As for this old schemer, he probably held no good intentions and was certain to take advantage of a crisis for personal gain by resorting to self serving manipulations.

The old man saw that Han Li remained speechless after he finished speaking. He couldn't help but feel anxious, so he flusteredly said, "I actually have an idea. Perhaps Junior Martial Disciple has heard these words before, but this idea will absolutely

ensure that everyone survives safely through the trip!”

The old man put up a profoundly mysterious expression and squeezed the wrinkles on his forehead for a moment; Han Li found his appearance to be quite humorous.

The yellow-haired youngster next to him seemed to greatly admire this old schemer. Although he didn't say anything, he exposed an expectant expression towards the old man.

Since he absolutely wasn't going to join their alliance, Han Li was unwilling to be tangled any further and bluntly rejected, “I am sorry. My humble self is not accustomed to working with others. I also do not intend to do so this time as well. If Senior Martial Brother wishes to join hands with others, then it would best to look for other Junior Martial Brothers!”

Han Li spoke very straightforwardly and incisively.

Han Li knew that only by clearly showing that he wasn't an inexperienced novice would he be able to make the other party give up and not continue to tangle with him. Otherwise, if this Senior Martial Brother Xiang felt there was the slightest chance to convince his fellow sect member, he would mostly likely continue to pester him. Han Li did not want to be bothered by this person.

When Old Man Xiang heard this, he realized he sought the wrong target. Although the person before him seemed quite young, his words were practiced and careful. He was clearly an experienced person who had passed through trials and hardships. The old man

spoke no more rubbish and took his leave with a slightly angry appearance.

Han Li saw them head in the direction of another disciple who was currently meditating on top of a rock.

Han Li faintly smiled and turned his body back, continuing to observe the several noteworthy fellow sect members. However, this time he saw “Junior Martial Sister Chen” and a woman of a common appearance standing next to her. There were a few talented and handsome men faintly gathering nearby.

The corner of Han Li’s mouth moved several times. Although he did not know why, he felt unfavorably towards those few men. He finally decided that what was out of sight was out of mind, and looked for an uninhabited area to close his eyes and rest..

Like that, the next morning had arrived. All of the disciples arrived at the mountain peak once more and stood in orderly rows, waiting for the arrival of the other Immortal sects.

After waiting for several hours, they had yet to see a single person, causing Han Li to inwardly rain endless curses. He almost suspected that the other sects were doing this deliberately as to consume the physical strength of everyone from Yellow Maple Valley.

However, what caused Han Li to feel even more distraught was that, as chance had it, “Junior Martial Sister Chen” had been assigned to stand to his right. With the familiar scent of her body

occasionally entering his nostrils, his imagination was somewhat let loose as if he was returning to that extremely alluring night.

In order to cover up the oddities from his face, with no better option left, Han Li lowered his head and feigned the appearance of great unease. However, his heart was filled with great and unending complaints. She was a pretty woman, but could her beauty go as far as for him to lose his self control?

However, this Martial Ancestor Li whom Han Li greatly admired stood at the very front. He stood with his face to the sky and was able to stand in such a manner for an unexpectedly long amount of time. It was unknown whether or not he went on a mental journey or if he was pondering about something!

Suddenly, Han Li felt a disturbance in his surroundings. It seemed that something happened!

He could not help but raise his head.

His fellow sect members all looked up toward the sky without exception and looked toward the horizon. Han Li also followed their gazes.

He saw that there were several star-like twinkling streaks of light in the deep blue sky, gradually growing larger. A short moment later, a series of black dots also appeared.

Underneath the black dots, the silver lights flashed; it seemed the

black dots were riding the streaks of starlight across the sky.

Seeing this marvel, everyone became even more restless.

“Quiet! What kind of children are you? This is the Clear Void Sect’s flying magic tool, the Rainbow Snowsilk. Do not make a fuss and lose face for our Yellow Maple Valley.” A short and stout middle-aged steward turned his head to give several reprimanding words with a dark complexion.

Those words were quite effective. The restlessness was immediately settled, and after that, there were only occasional whispers.

At this moment, the black dots already became clear. Each of them was a cultivator wearing gray Daoist robes. The majority of them were true Daoist Priests, each holding a horsetail whisk with their hair tied up into a bun. However, those who did not wear Daoist robes appeared to be mortals, as if they were sheltered children who had yet to leave home.

Han Li and the others clearly saw that the stars beneath their feet were actually a stiff white rainbow bridge covered with dazzling specks of silver white light. It was unknown how the specks of light were embedded within the object.

As Han Li carefully watched the scene, the white rainbow bridge carrying the Clear Void Sect’s members descended onto the mountain and landed across from the members of Yellow Maple Valley.

Their leader, a middle-aged Daoist Priest, lightly moved his hand, and the white light flashed. The Rainbow Snowsilk's rainbow bridges disappeared, and in his hand appeared a brocade object.

"I didn't think that Benefactor Li would be leading this time. This humble Daoist Fu Yunzi greets you!" This Daoist Priest walked several steps to the front of Martial Ancestor Li and spoke with radiant happiness. From his tone, it seemed they were acquaintances.

"Humph! If this old facetious Daoist could come, then why couldn't I come?" Martial Ancestor Li bluntly said with both hands behind his back.

"Hehe, within each sect, we've entered Core Formation the latest. If we didn't do these errands, who would?" The Daoist Priest didn't mind in the least, and he swung his horsetail whisk with a constant smile.

"This old facetious Daoist is wily and cunning. Last time, you brought suffering upon me. Don't think you will get the chance to do so again!"

"What is Benefactor Li talking about? Recognizing lost bets is a right and proper matter. Who was possibly wronged?" The Daoist Priest laughed.

When Martial Ancestor Li heard this, a cold light flashed through his eyes. It seemed that he was about to be angry, but he

immediately thought of something and stepped down with grandeur, unwillingly saying, “After that chunk of iron essence was refined into your great azure sword, its power greatly increased; This Li spent ten years purifying it but nonetheless had to cheaply give it away to this old facetious Daoist!”

His words contained great grievances. It was clear he felt much heartache over that iron essence.

“Hehe, so it turns out that the renowned Immortal Master Li actually cared so much about a mere piece of iron essence! Fine, this time I will produce another item, one definitely greater than that iron essence. If you win this bet, you will be able to make up for your previous loss.” The Daoist Priest said with a smile as he twirled his beard.

Chapter 176: Making A Bet

“No bet! Absolutely not! Do you think that I would do the same thing twice?” Martial Ancestor Li shook his head as if he were beating a drum and voiced his refusal.

“No bet? Benefactor Li’s standards are actually so high. Does the blood from the Inner Dan of a demonic flood dragon not even enter his eyes?” The Daoist priest wore an astonished expression as if he couldn’t believe it.

However, when Han Li saw his expression, he felt it was very false.

“Blood from a flood dragon’s Inner Dan?” Although Martial Ancestor Li originally intended to absolutely refuse to be pulled into a relationship with the Daoist priest, when he heard the name of the item, his expression abruptly changed, and his words somewhat trembled.

“Yes! If Benefactor Li wants to know about this item, I shall explain. Thirty years ago, at the dangerous rapids of the State of Yuan Wu’s Coiling Dragon River, I paid a great price for this item so I could procure it for Benefactor!” The Daoist Priest calmly and leisurely said while eating up the other party’s expression.

“Impossible! How could the blood of a flood dragon be acquired, not to mention blood kept in its Inner Dan. This is not something that can be said without thinking. Are you making fun of me?” Martial Ancestor Li sobered up from his excitement and exposed

an appearance of doubt.

“Is this humble Daoist not a monk? I would not lie. Benefactor can take a look for himself.”

The Daoist Priest did not want to waste time explaining and merely flipped his hand, revealing a white sphere filled with wisps of blood. Martial Ancestor Li's eyes widened, wishing he could rush over and grab it.

“If Benefactor's Horned Silver Python were to consume this Dan and undergo secluded cultivation for ten to twenty years, in all likelihood it would leap from the middle stage of Foundation Establishment to the late stage. With another hundred years of bitter cultivation, it wouldn't be impossible to enter Core Formation.” The Daoist Priest's words were filled with enticement.

When Martial Ancestor Li heard these words, he coldly snorted and stiffened his face. It seemed he was unmoved, but his indefinite and flickering gaze exposed the restlessness of his heart.

“With such a rare wager, why is Benefactor hesitating for so long? Could it be you truly don't think very highly of the strength of your valley's disciples?” The Daoist Priest curled his lips, goading him to accept.

“To say the disciples of our Yellow Maple Valley are inferior to those of your Clear Void Sect is overcritical.” Martial Ancestor Li wore a displeased expression.

He swept his eyes past the party behind the Daoist Priest and immediately gained a rough estimate of the Clear Void Sect's disciples. Their strength was about the same as that of the Yellow Maple Valley's disciples.

“Fine, I will gamble! However, what treasure of mine would you have me wager?”

After a moment of consideration from Martial Ancestor Li, he felt that his odds of winning were fifty percent. With the addition of his extreme longing for that Inner Dan, he eventually nodded and agreed. However, he still cautiously asked that question.

“Hehe, this humble Daoist isn't interested in any of Benefactor's other treasures. If he happens to luckily win, then he desires Benefactor to give this humble Daoist two equivalent chunks of iron essence twenty years from now. The essence of Benefactor Li's True Fire is clear. It is quite famous among the Seven Great Sects. For you, this is surely a trivial matter!” The Daoist Priest said with squinted eyes and a smile. Even so, a faint trace of treachery was contained within his words.

“You want two equivalent chunks of iron essence?” Martial Ancestor Li's complexion was unsightly and he almost jumped immediately after hearing these words.

“You old facetious Daoist, you plan to have me toil bitterly!”

“How is that? So long as you win, you aren't required to. This is the Inner Dan of a grade two demonic beast, equivalent to that of

us initial Core Formation stage experts. It is absolutely worth the price.” The Daoist Priest said while shaking his head.

Martial Ancestor Li’s complexion grew uncertain. After a moment, he eventually extended his palm and coldly asked, “Are we following the same rules as last time? Which sect gathers the most spiritual medicines, followed by the quality, and lastly the number of people who leave the forbidden area alive!?”

“Of course, it will be the same as before.”

The Daoist Priest was greatly happy and hastily extended his palm. He struck it against the other party’s, officializing the bet.

A sharp Pa! sound out.

Although the Daoist Priest struck his palm, he wasn’t happy in the least and was actually grieving.

The palm he struck was not Martial Ancestor Li’s, but rather a different, filthy hand. This hand strangely appeared between the two and was covered with grease and filth. Nobody knew when it had last been washed!

Two sects’ disciples who had been closely paying attention to the two Martial Ancestors’ dialogue were stunned by this ghostly scene.

“Senior Qiong!”

The Daoist Priest and Martial Ancestor Li yelled at the same time with a green complexion.

“Who is a Senior? I don’t dare to be regarded as such. I am at Core Formation, much like yourselves. It’s just that I happened to enter it a few years earlier!” The lazy voice that came from between them was spoken by a queerly dressed man.

This person wore a blue garment with several patches and had short hair that was several inches long. He had an azure cloth bag at his waist that had been washed pale. Even though his bag made it seem like he was a person who loved cleanliness, his face was smothered with dark grease to the point where his true face could not be seen.

“A few years? More like several hundred!”

After clearly seeing the person’s appearance, Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest bitterly smiled. They both let out a regretful sigh, ‘It was this person as expected’. However, they didn’t dare to show the slightest disrespect.

Not only was this eccentric a step into the Nascent Soul stage, but his age alone was large enough to scare people. Furthermore, his self-created Incorporeal Evasion Technique had shaken the cultivation world and was well-known in the cultivation sects of nearby countries.

It was unknown whether it was because his death was imminent

or if he was unable to enter Nascent Soul, but in the past hundred years, he had become more and more eccentric and became very fond of teasing other Core Formation experts. Nearly all of the tens of these high-level experts had been pranked to exhaustion.

However, there was nothing even his sect's Great Martial Ancestors could do to him.

With regards to the deepness of his magic power, this person was number one among Core Formation Experts. As for background, he was a member of the strongest sect among the Seven Great Sects, the Masked Moon Sect. If one were to look for one of the sect's Nascent Soul "Authorities" to lecture him, these "Authorities" were likely to ignore those people as they were unwilling to invite trouble over such trivial matters!

As it was, this person was among the higher powers in the cultivation world, known for being an evil tyrant and a hoodlum. Essentially, whoever saw him was subject to the whims of fate! They could only hope that his mood for the day was good, else suffering from his small tricks would be unavoidable!

When this "Senior" suddenly graced them with his presence, how could Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest not be startled and feel their stomachs grow restless!? These two people have already suffered from his torment!

"Since you've made a wager, just so that you're not too lonely, count this rotten old man in as well!" This great Senior's mood seemed to be quite good; however, his words caused the two to complain incessantly.

“Senior must be joking. How could the disciples of our sects compare to the Masked Moon Sect’s brilliant students? We would be certain to lose, so there is no need to gamble. We respectfully concede!” said the Daoist Priest with a forced smile.

Martial Ancestor Li closed his lips, but his face revealed an expression that showed he was a hundred and twenty percent in favor of those words.

When the exalted old man heard this, he coldly laughed several times and turned his eyes, strangely saying, “How could I take such an unfair advantage? Be at ease, so long as the performance of both your sects surpass my own, then that will count as my loss. Afterwards, you can then decide who won among yourselves.”

“Really?”

When the Daoist Priest heard this, he could not help but let out a breath of relief. Although this person was moody and laughed or scolded as he desired, his words were certainly resolute and decisive, and he never turned his back on a promise. With that said, this wager could be regarded as fair, even giving the two a small advantage.

“I refined these three Incorporeal Needle treasure talismans at a whim, but I don’t have any juniors, so I will stake them in the gamble!” This Elder raised his hand, suddenly revealing three talismans with a seven-colored needle drawn on each one. He then put them away in an instant.

When Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest saw this, they were unable to conceal the alarm on their faces. They couldn't help but look at each other and make out the greed in each other's eyes.

Chapter 177: Righteous And Evil Of The Cultivation World

This treasure was refined from the essence of the five metals and was meant to be integrated with this man's creation, the Incorporeal Evasion Technique. It could arrive without a shadow and leave without a trace. As it could injure without form, it was truly difficult to deal with.

It was said that it would even give Nascent Soul experts a grand headache; it was one of the treasures this Senior relied on to oppress others.

Even if they obtained the Formless Needle treasure talisman, on the mere basis of its miraculous invisibility, it could be considered a wondrous life-saving treasure. At the very least, Core Formation experts would be unable to cope with this strange object.

“Good, this one will wager in accordance to this exalted Senior's words!” After slight consideration, the Daoist Priest agreed after feeling that the terms were acceptable.

As for Martial Ancestor Li, with the thought of reaping huge benefits, he clenched his teeth and tacitly agreed.

Pa! Pa!

The three mutually struck their palms with each other, making their wager official.

“Senior, why have you come here? Could it be that the Masked Moon Sect’s group consists of only you?” Once the three separated, the Daoist Priest suddenly thought of something and asked this question.

“I’ve brought a group, so the sect can feel at ease. The one leading the sect is that girl Ni Chang. I’ve merely come along to see whether or not there were any new ferocious young people in any of the other sects,” the esteemed Senior unhappily remarked after widely opening his eyes.

“Now that I’ve taken a look, they’re pretty much the same! I reckon that the truly talented disciples in Martial Nephew’s sect would hardly be put forward. They would certainly be treated like treasures. Think about it! Without experiencing dangerous encounters, what’s the use if they are talented? The moment they meet nefarious entities, they will be slaughtered like sheep!”

This Senior seemed to greatly disapprove of the sect’s way of handling things and wore a “You are all gravely mistaken” expression.

When Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest heard this, their faces didn’t change in the slightest, but they were cursing silently in their hearts.

‘This old eccentric actually says this easily. How would our sects lightly bring out our more talented disciples to participate in this Trial by Fire where they’re almost certain to die? Do you think of

us as idiots! They could go elsewhere to get experience, why insist in coming to this Trial by Blood and Fire?’

Naturally, these words could only be smothered in their bellies. They absolutely wouldn’t dare to speak this in front of this man. Otherwise, wouldn’t that just be bringing misfortune upon themselves? The Daoist Priest and Martial Ancestor were rather tactful.

Naturally, this further proved that in the cultivation world, those with large fists have simple reasoning.

The disciples of the two sects clearly heard about the matter of the trio’s wager on the trip to the forbidden area and could not help but burst into an uproar. Their expressions had nothing in common and appeared extremely odd.

Naturally, no one would be so stupid to directly denounce the three, so they could only keep their resentment to themselves. Otherwise, with the mere movement of their pinkie, the lives of these novice cultivator were forfeit.

When Martial Ancestor Li saw those two depart, he turned around to sweep his face across the Yellow Maple Valley’s disciples. Then he coldly said a few words that caused Han Li and the others to be stunned, “I am aware that you feel our wager on your lives seems to hold you in far too little regard. Were it someone else, perhaps they would provide an excuse, but I have always disdained this! I will clearly tell you that this is the true appearance and cruel nature of the cultivation world. This can be considered a few words of advice.”

“Hear this well. In the world of cultivation, regardless of whether you’re a righteous person from a prestigious clan or an evil fiend who abandoned the Dao, advancement is an act against nature where only the strong survive. However, those who are righteous progress slowly, and their success will flow naturally where conditions are correct; their cultivation arts are relatively gentle. But they often act villainously under the false pretense of exterminating evil and defending the Dao, mostly hypocrites that feign righteousness. Those demonic sects that follow the Dao of Devils make every effort to greatly advance their magic power, blindly pursuing formidable, mighty cultivation arts and fiercely cultivating malicious amount of Yin energy. They are also disliked for being opportunistic. Although they claim to be following their heart’s desires and displaying their true nature, in reality, their actions gradually become more extreme as they progress in cultivation. They lose their human nature until they become bloodthirsty and cruel.”

“However, regardless of whether the sect lies on the righteous or evil side, it is only a matter of how they are portrayed. In reality, both follow the rule that the weak are prey to the strong. Us cultivators are the same as the mortals of the secular world! Experts on the higher realm of cultivation look upon low-level cultivators as powerless insects. They are unworthy of being spoken to and will die in a single strike. This is a normal matter.”

With this said, Martial Ancestor Li paused. His voice seemed to hold some disapproval toward these so-called righteous and evil sects. This attitude caused the disciples to feel somewhat confused. A somewhat bold disciple could not help but ask, “Martial Ancestor, is our Yellow Maple Valley righteous or villainous?”

“Hehe! We are neither righteous nor villainous. The other six sects are also the same.” He replied with a cold smile.

“You are all young, and the time since you’ve entered the sect is short. That is why you haven’t yet been informed of the history of the State of Yue’s cultivation world!”

“A thousand years ago, our State of Yue was like the other regions, in opposition between Righteousness and Evil. During that time, the Seven Great Sects were small sects that had yet to enter the fray. In order to survive, they were forced to become righteous or evil according to the way the wind blew. If a side’s strength was slightly greater, those small sects would join that side. These Great Righteous and Evil Sects fundamentally looked down upon them with contempt. However, later the Righteous and Evil sides broke out into an extremely desperate battle that exhausted all of their experts. After that battle, their strength was greatly depleted, so they no longer had the strength to suppress Yellow Maple Valley along with the other small sects. After a period of time, our Seven Great Sects managed to join hands and surpass the two sides, thoroughly extinguishing their ideology and avoiding future problems.”

“The current cultivation arts you’ve learned are actually the spoils of war from back then. This was the period when our Seven Great Sects established ourselves as the lone great powers in the State of Yue. If there are still Righteous or Evil sects that wish to invade this place, our seven sects will immediately join hands and repel them. We will absolutely prevent them from establishing themselves. As a result, the cultivation arts our Seven Great Sects teach include those from both Righteous and Evil sects along with

a few unique ones as well. In the dispute, we could be regarded as neutral.”

When Martial Ancestor Li said this, he couldn't help but wear a content expression.

“Previously, you all continuously and bitterly cultivated in the valley. Whenever you left the sect mountains, you've all traveled around the large area of the State of Yue but have never met with the true world of cultivation, nor have yet experienced the dark and bloody side of the cultivation world. However during earlier periods, on the sides of Righteousness and Evil existed the Five Great Cultivation Schools side by side: Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, Devilish, and Demonic. The degree of chaos during that time exceeds your very imagination, making it seem as if pillaging and genocide were simply common occurrences”

With this said, his expression grew completely solemn, but soon after his face relaxed. Then he coldly added, “Alright, I'm going to wake you all up a bit to prevent you all from becoming arrogant. Remember that in the world of cultivation, if your strength does not equal another's, don't blindly speak respectful words. This so-called respect can only be given to those experts far above the rest, otherwise you'll be bringing about your own destruction! Hehe, I wonder how many of you will live to truly comprehend these words after a few days?”

When Han Li and the other disciples had heard this, they were already at a loss for words and were exceptionally shocked. The words spoken to these disciples were far too surprising.

“You should’ve heard the wager we made previously. This particular wager, however, is quite significant to me! So long as I win the wager, I definitely won’t treat you all unfairly. Those disciples who help me win will be heavily rewarded. As for the one who contributes the most, I will personally take him as a disciple after he reaches Foundation Establishment.”

The Yellow Maple Valley’s disciples who still hadn’t comprehended the “sincere advice” were suddenly excited by the grand promise following it.

To be able to become an apprentice to a Core Formation expert, those who received this privilege were but a few tens. This was a golden opportunity that only occurred every thousand years!

Seeing the crowd before him excited with eagerness in each of their eyes, Martial Ancestor Li faintly smiled and was greatly satisfied.

So long as he won this wager, to remember three or four disciple’s names was a trivial matter. At most he would simply settle down in some area and pass down some superficial cultivation arts. Wasn’t that matter easily resolved?

Chapter 178: Masked Moon Sect

Han Li was moved after hearing the reward. He knew clearly that on the path of cultivation, he could definitely go through less trouble if a master could guide and point him in the right direction. This would benefit his cultivation.

But at the same time, this Martial Ancestor Li was definitely not someone he could lie to easily. Han Li had plenty of secrets himself, and if he was in contact with him for too long, Han Li was afraid that he would sense that something was wrong. If Martial Ancestor Li questioned him, it would be Han Li seeking his own death.

Moreover, hearing those pieces of “advice” he gave earlier, this person must not be someone who cherished the relationship between a master and a disciple. He would most likely use the discipleship to have others prey on the weak and kill for the treasure.

After thinking about it carefully, Han Li’s somewhat enticed mind calmed down right away.

The other Yellow Maple Valley disciples didn’t have these kinds of misgivings. They were each rubbing their palms as their morale rose greatly. Now they not only had to battle for their survival, but they also had to fight for their own future.

Han Li unconsciously took a look at Junior Martial Sister Chen and saw her blushed cheeks, her fists that were held tightly, and

her shining eyes. It looked like she had made her decision.

Han Li sighed to himself and didn't bother to keep paying attention to other people from the Yellow Maple Valley. Instead he looked towards the Clear Void Sect.

That Daoist Priest was shooting off his mouth to the people of the sect. He acted very excited from time to time and made those young Daoist Priests cheer each time. Each one of them was excited. It seemed like the brainwashing was successful. Of course, there were also some elder Daoist Priests whose expressions remained calm all along, not affected whatsoever.

Just as Han Li thought it was interesting and was enjoying it, someone suddenly yelled,

“Look! The people from the Masked Moon Sect are here! It's the Heavenly Divine Moon Boat!”

Hearing this, Han Li was stunned and looked up into the sky.

A small bright, white dot was shining in the sky, slowly approaching.

Its speed was extremely fast. No long after, it was in the sky above the mountain. It was actually an enormous ship sculpted from green jade. Outside the wall of the ship was a delicate drawing of a dragon and a phoenix, making the ship seem extremely luxurious. There was even an incredibly large white

shield surrounding the ship.

The ship was filled with a large crowd, half of them men and the other half women, all of whom were clad in white. The one leader was an attractive young woman who was well-dressed. Each of her movements was amorous and stirred people's souls.

After this woman got off from the jade ship and removed the white shield, she opened her almond-shaped lips lightly and said, "Two Martial Brothers, Martial Uncle Qiong, here is Ni Chang's greetings!"

Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest couldn't dare to keep her waiting and immediately returned the courtesy. On the other hand, that Senior Qiong grinned on contrary, when suddenly his figure became blurry. He disappeared into the air, leaving a sentence and some prideful yet strange laughter.

"Seven days from now, I will come back here. Prepare the wager beforehand! This time I will surely win!"

The Daoist Priest and Martial Ancestor Li looked at each other. They didn't know why this old man had such confidence! They checked earlier, and even though the Masked Moon Sect's disciples were indeed stronger than their two sects, there was no reason to boast.

The young woman's beautiful eyes looked around, and she asked out of curiosity. After finding out the details of the bet, she couldn't help but laugh; her laughter could shake a flower's

branches and suck in people's hearts and souls.

That young woman's flirtatious manner made many of the young male disciples from the three sects stare blatantly and almost drool.

But the Daoist Priest and Martial Ancestor Li couldn't care about the wonderful scene in front of them since both of their hearts just dropped. They felt like they had walked into a trap, and their faces couldn't help but become bitter.

Was it possible that the Masked Moon Sect had some kind of trump card prepared for this trip that could suppress both of the sects?

The two of them controlled themselves. Even though they felt gloomy about this, they felt embarrassed to directly ask the young woman for the whole story. As for the beautiful young woman, Fairy Ni Chang, she naturally pretended not to know about it and took pleasure in doing so. She led the conversation away and started chatting about some other interesting things.

The sight of Han Li and the other male disciples from Yellow Maple Valley had already focused onto the large crowd of female disciples that just arrived.

They had previously heard that the Masked Moon Sect promoted pair cultivation techniques, so at least half of the recruited disciples were females, and they absolutely did not accept below-average appearances.

Now seeing it for themselves, the female disciples' reputation was really well-deserved. This group of women were each ravishingly beautiful, as fair as a flower, and gorgeous like the moon. Watching them made them keep drooling, their minds running wild.

Han Li was slightly better off. Although for a moment he feasted his eyes, with his outstanding willpower he was quickly able to restrain his mind and calm his heart.

That was when he realized that the female disciples from the Masked Moon Sect seemed to be used to being watched by so many people at the same time. Their expression didn't change as they chatted among themselves freely. Some of them even winked a few times towards the people who were watching them, making those spectators lose strength in their legs and have butterflies in their stomachs without knowing what to make of it.

But the male disciple's reactions were exactly the opposite. Each of their eyes showed anger. They especially cared of the young girls beside them, so they furiously returned the gaze of everyone who was staring.

Han Li smiled softly. He understood just by looking at the men and women standing together in pairs that even if these pairs were not really couples, they must be pairs that had been arranged for cultivation. That was why the male disciples were so furious! They probably already saw the person beside them as their private property, even if the female disciples didn't think the same way.

Strangely, Han Li noticed that the male disciples were staring not only at the Yellow Maple Valley's disciples, but also toward the people from the Clear Void Sect.

Under his curiosity, he turned his head and saw that the small and vigorous Daoist Priests were indeed peeking at the young girls from time to time and then immediately turned their sight away, as if they were afraid of being caught in their act. They seemed extremely sneaky.

Han Li tried to press down the hilarious feeling in his heart, afraid that he would actually laugh out loud!

Although he wasn't sure whether he got the right impression, Han Li kept having the feeling that the female disciples from the Masked Moon Sect were giving more flirtatious winks to the small Daoist Priests than to the Yellow Maple Valley's side.

This left him speechless for a while.

But when he thought better of it, Han Li felt dreadful in his heart. These disciples did not come here to flirt but rather for a battle of survival. If each of the sect's young disciples went up against the Masked Moon Sect's female disciples, Han Li was afraid that they would lose a third of the battle even before the fight started. After all, not everyone would be able to directly take down these beautiful women.

But what puzzled Han Li even more was that the disciples from the Masked Moon Sect, regardless of whether they were either a

man or a woman, they were all very young. Not one of them was old, which didn't make sense. If someone were to say that some of these people were actually old monsters that possessed eternal youth, Han Li would absolutely not believe it. Watching their flirtatious actions, they were at most about twenty years old, and there were no signs of aging on their figures.

But since this Trial by Blood and Fire was known as a suicidal trip, it was impossible for so many young people to come here to die on their own volition. Even if that were the case, it was impossible for them to come in so many pairs. Han Li would die before he believed that their relationships were all so deep that they could live and die together.

Both the Yellow Maple Valley and the Clear Void Sect had some elderly figures in their line-up.

Because their time was almost up, even if they didn't participate in this trip to the forbidden area, they wouldn't live long. Therefore they vainly attempted to make a last-ditch effort. If they could successfully obtain the Foundation Establishment Pill and then luckily enter Foundation Establishment, their fate would be completely different. Even though there would definitely be no hope of cultivating to Core Formation, it would still be a gain to be able to live for another hundred years.

Even though there weren't that many old folks with these thoughts who came to participate in the Trial by Blood and Fire, there was still a total of seven or eight from the two sects, and yet the Masked Moon Sect didn't have any. This was a bit strange in Han Li's eyes.

Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest seemed to have realized that something was wrong, and their faces darkened even more. Even though they were still chatting with Fairy Ni Chang from the Masked Moon Sect, anyone could tell that they have drifted off in their minds.

Shortly after, the rest of the four sects all arrived one by one. The ones who left the biggest impression on Han Li were the ones from the Giant Sword Sect and the Spirit Beast Mountain.

Everyone from the Giant Sword Sect was male. They were all dressed in black, each with a giant, sheath-less sword on their backs. With extremely cold expressions on their faces, they each gave off a murderous spirit.

The people from the Spirit Beast Mountain were dressed in very colorful and flashy clothing, wearing all kinds of leather with numerous pockets. There even seemed to be living creatures moving around in their clothes. This frightened the disciples from the other sects to no end.

As for the people from the Saber Transformation Dock and the Heavenly Imperial Fortress, aside from how they each dressed, they were at least considered normal people in Han Li's eyes. They were like the Yellow Maple Valley's disciples, and many of them were whispering with nervous faces.

Chapter 179: Breaking The Barrier

While the leaders of every sect gathered together to discuss how to open the forbidden area, Han Li was not idle. He was sizing up the vicious characters of each of the sects.

Toward a few experts at the peak of the thirteenth layer of their cultivation art, Han Li was calculating whether he could hide, escape or hide behind someone. Han Li absolutely didn't wish for another battle like the one he had with "Senior Martial Brother Lu" and exhaust every last drop of magic power.

It should be known that this situation was completely different from that last time. This time, he didn't face a single enemy, but rather great numbers of red-eyed cultivators. If he did not preserve his strength and continuously maintain his power to strike back, he would certainly be one of the first to be eliminated.

While he was looking from the side and pondering, Han Li suddenly felt as if someone was staring at him. He was slightly alarmed and could not help but return the gaze.

A female disciple from the Spirit Beast Mountain was somewhat evasively looking at Han Li. After seeing her beautiful face, he unexpectedly felt somewhat familiar with her.

Han Li was shocked. He recognized that woman. A slim figure appeared from the depths of his memory.

"It's her, the girl who sold me the Golden Sincerity Brush at the

Great South Valley. How did she enter Spirit Beast Mountain set and participate in this Trial by Blood and Fire?" The young woman was even more charming than he had remembered, causing him to be somewhat doubtful.

However, her easily blushing face remained fresh in his memory, and he felt very favorable towards her!

With this thought, he could not help but smile toward the young woman.

It was obvious the young woman had clearly seen his smile since her two cheeks were suddenly flushed red. It seemed she was as easily embarrassed as before!

The fully bearded man who stood behind the young woman seemed to notice the actions of Han Li and the young woman, and his complexion sunk. He suddenly said something to the young woman in a stern voice, and the young woman's expression immediately paled. She lowered her head silently, no longer daring to look towards Han Li's direction!

That man did not let the matter go and stared at Han Li with a malicious gaze.

Han Li wrinkled his brow. It seemed the days that the girl spent at Spirit Beast Mountain had been harsh. This fully bearded man was actually one of the vicious characters he had taken note of a moment ago, one of the disciples with a cultivation at the thirteenth layer. This young woman was being so carefully

watched by him; it was certain she had suffered quite a bit.

However, Han Li was not a person from Spirit Beast Mountain. Furthermore, once they were in the forbidden area, those who weren't enemies at the moment would become enemies. He naturally did not respond to the provocation and paid no attention to the grimace aimed at him.

Han Li's action angered the bearded man until his face flowed with blood. However, he had no method to grab Han Li, and with no better option, he turned his head to the young woman and roared several words in a low voice, provoking the nearby Spirit Beast Mountain disciples until they raised their eyebrows. Most of them glanced at the young woman with a look of hatred.

Han Li grew sullen and felt much pity toward the young woman. However, because he was separated by such a long distance, he was unable to clearly hear what the bearded man was saying.

Because he did not want to wrong this young woman again, Han Li no longer incited this boor who knew no manners toward women. Though, Han Li was confident that he had sufficient methods to cause this person to seethe with anger without being able to retaliate.

At this moment, each of the sect's Martial Ancestor finished their talks and returned to their sect's disciples. They then brought their juniors into the air, flying toward the famed forbidden area.

After flying for several hours toward the border of the State of

Yuan Wu, they fell onto an expansive yellow earth slope that had no end. Apart from a pile of stones, not a single blade of grass could be seen. There was only a vast, endless yellow as far as the eye could see.

“Could it be here?”

Han Li and the others felt greatly surprised. This truly did not look like a place where spiritual objects of Heaven and Earth were nurtured.

Several of the Core Formation experts gathered again to say a few words, Then a tall and sturdy expert from the Giant Sword Sect suddenly walked out alone. After he walked forward about ten steps, he stopped.

He extended his left hand, and yellow light surged forth from the floor. It was as if a yellow dragon sprung forth from the mud and condensed into a giant mud sword in his hand.

With a finger from his right hand, he softly stroked the sword from the handle to its point. A bright white light shined along his finger, making the mud sword gray in an instant, turning it into a giant heavy stone sword.

This skill of turning mud into stone was a mid-grade magic technique, causing the disciples of the seven sects to be astonished and widely opening their horizons.

After this was done, the expert from the Giant Sword Sect did not stop. Instead, he felt the sword in both hands and lowered his body. With a large shout, he threw the stone sword as fast as a meteor, sharply launching straight it into the sky.

This event shook the hearts of those who were present. When the stone sword barely flew the distance of several tens of steps, it immediately touched something. After a sudden tremor, it turned to fine dust, and an azure light covered the great expanse of the sky, causing everybody's skin to shine with an azure glow.

While the crowd of disciples was scared witless, the azure light intensely surged for no reason, causing countless wind blades to scream out. They madly flew out everywhere, creating a wall of wind blades that neither wind nor rain could penetrate. The wind wall had no end to either side, and nobody knew where it ended. The azure light let out the hisses of wind from all direction.

If someone were to enter the wall, they would immediately know the feeling of death from a thousand cuts and turn into tens of thousands of pieces.

‘This restrictive barrier is truly astonishing, and yet nobody knows what kind of remarkable ancient expert was able to set up such a tremendously ferocious spell formation. In comparison, Yellow Maple Valley's protective formations are like that of a child playing around. It's not worth mentioning.’ Han Li thought, inwardly sighing.

At this moment, the Giant Sword Sect's expert shook his head and walked back. The remaining leaders declared that the time had

yet to come and told the disciples to first rest for a short time. They would open the forbidden area in a moment.

Like that, the person from the Giant Sword Sect did the same thing every two hours to test the strength of the restrictive barrier. When the fourth stone word was thrown, the amount of wind blades rushing forth from the azure light clearly decreased by a great amount.

With these circumstances, the six other Core Formation experts took the same actions and flew out shoulder to shoulder.

Martial Ancestor Li held out his hand; a ring-shaped object about a foot-long slowly emerged from his palm, releasing a fierce silver radiance. The Daoist Priest patted the back of his head and spouted out an inch-long azure light from his mouth. As it flew down the wind, it lengthened, transforming into a flying sword several feet long.

The other five respectively let out extremely dazzling items: a pink ribbon, a dragon-like walking stick, a huge black green sword, a long saber emitting red light, an official's seal flickering with yellow light.

The seven items from the seven people enhanced each other's brilliance, creating the appearance of a ring that charged directly into the great formation of wind blades.

These were the magic treasures that these experts created after years of bitter temperament once they entered Core Formation.

Each of the sect's disciples didn't dare to be negligent. Under the orders of their Foundation Establishment Seniors, they all stood behind the seven ancestors in seven columns, preparing to enter the forbidden area at any time.

A burst of loud rumbling sounded out as the seven magic treasures fiercely fought against the wind blades. All sorts of rays of light shot off in every direction, producing a strange whistle from time to time that caused the disciples who were watching to become very nervous.

Martial Ancestor Li's foot-long ring spun and revolved continuously, releasing silver lights that at some moments seemed large and other times seemed small as if it were communicating with spirits. Countless wind blades struck against it.

The azure flying sword transformed into a flood dragon more than ten Zhang long. Each of the sword strikes carried a strange cry that astonished one's soul.

The other five magic treasures were also remarkable, especially that Mei Tianque's yellow seal. It was the most powerful. Each time it crushed down, it was as if a small mountain arose with the sound of thunder bursting out. However, after each attack, it withdrew and returned to its original form. Furthermore, its flight was slow and clumsy.

Although the might of the seven magic treasures were astonishing and the large formation wind blades considerably

weakened, it was still incomparably strenuous. Every step toward the wind wall required a great amount of effort. Before long, faint traces of sweat could be seen on the foreheads of these seven experts.

After six to eight hours of fierce fighting, the seven experts were sweating profusely. However, their magic treasures were finally winning, and they were able to beat open a passage in the wind wall about a Zhang long. Nobody could see what existed beyond the passage.

“Quickly enter! We won’t be able to endure for long!” The Daoist Priest took the initiative to yell. Because he had the weakest magic power among the seven, he was also sweating the most.

When the disciples of the seven sects heard this, they dared not be negligent and flew into the passage in alternating turns.

At that moment, everyone was silent with dark expressions. They all know that once they entered the forbidden area, everyone would immediately become an enemy of life or death. Even fellow apprentices from the same sect could not be trusted.

Han Li stood in the middle rear of the column formations. In front of him was a Giant Sword Sect disciple, and behind him stood a disciple from the Saber Transformation Dock.

The passage was not long, simply a distance of twenty Zhang. In the instant Han Li flew out of the exit, the scene before him caused him to feel a moment of dizziness. Before his very eyes, the people

behind him and the exit had disappeared without a trace.

Chapter 180: Black Dragon Pond

The dark gray rotting earth was dotted with continuously bubbling muddy puddles, grotesque and twisted trees, and an unknown short blood-red grass beneath his legs. The air was filled with a strange, pungent odor. This was what Han Li observed once he grew clearheaded.

Han Li could not help but be curious towards the bizarre environment. Han Li first diligently looked in all directions to see whether or not there were people around him. After all, the greatest source of danger were the sect disciples that entered the forbidden area along with him.

It seemed that he was quite lucky. Within several tens of Zhang, there was no one else aside from himself. He softly let out a sigh.

However, he did not yet relax his guard but rather held onto a talisman with one hand and the “Gold Beetle Swarm Blades” with the other so that he would be absolutely safe.

At that moment, Han Li was able to slightly calm himself. He carefully observed his surroundings for anything strange.

Han Li was not frightened from having suddenly appeared in an unfamiliar area. Before the trip to the forbidden area, those stewards had given everyone detailed information concerning the forbidden area.

The information mentioned that once someone entered the

forbidden area, they would be affected by some shifting formation spell and be instantly transported to some corner in the forbidden area. As for what location, that would depend on the individual's luck.

If one was able to be transferred to the area closest to the center, they would be able to gather many spiritual herbs. These figures would be the greatly fortunate ones. One could also be delivered directly beneath the stares of several demonic beasts. If that were the case, there wouldn't even be a bloody battle. They would be fundamentally incapable of escaping with their body intact. As for those with even worse bad luck, they might be delivered to some dangerous area and would immediately die. Naturally, these sort of circumstances were minimal.

The circumstances that occurred the most were those like Han Li, transported to some corner of the forbidden area and only able to blindly move forward.

The reason why those circumstances occurred, according to the deduction of those senior experts, was because of the manner by which they broke the barrier and entered. Since they used an improper method to enter, it was only natural they would activate a few restrictions and encounter a few mishaps.

While Han Li cautiously paced the vicinity in a circle, he compared the nearby environment with the information he had memorized. He eventually remembered some very useful information accumulated by the disciples who left the forbidden area; it was vastly useful to those who entered for the first time.

“The Black Dragon Pond is located in the forbidden area’s northeast corner. The pond is several tens of Zhang deep at its center, with a radius of over ten Li. There are many Rotting Bone Flowers, Serpent Slug Trees, and other similar plants that can be used to create poison, but their value is not much.”

“At the center of the Black Dragon Pond, every tens of years or so, a few clumps of “Cold Smoke Grass” appear near the pond water. This is a wondrous herb that can be used in an extensive number of applications. If possible, gather as many as possible since the sect is sure to exchange great rewards for them. However, one must pay attention to the pool’s depths as it may conceal a group of lower grade one demonic beasts, the Cold Ice Toads. However, they have a meek nature. So long as one does not take the initiative to provoke them, they will not pose much danger.”

After Han Li went over the information several more times, he had several thoughts in mind.

According to common conventions, the closer one was to the center of the forbidden area, the rarer spiritual items one would find along with stronger demonic beasts guarding them. The Black Dragon Pond was located near the outer edges but not in the outermost layer. If he hurried, he would be able to reach the innermost region within a day.

With this thought, Han Li didn’t dare to use flying tools. Instead, he jumped up a large, lush tree and surveyed in every direction. After he clearly identified the direction, he jumped down.

The pool was south of Han Li and happened to lead towards the

forbidden area's central area. It seemed he would be able to take a look in passing.

Han Li used a concealment technique on his body. Afterwards, he carefully walked forward on the path with quick and light footsteps. It was unknown if it was because Han Li was excessively nervous, but after walking several Li on the path, he had yet to encounter anything unexpected. It seemed he was the only person in the Black Dragon Pond area.

When he heard the sound of flowing water, Han Li was able to slightly relax his tense mind.

After chopping down winding branches that obstructed his path, he was able to see a deep dark-green pond. Nobody had yet to approach it. The forest's chilling air already caused Han Li to shiver.

‘This is the Black Dragon Pond?’ Han Li curiously sized it up.

The size of the pool could not be considered large, and its surrounding area was filled with Serpent Slug Trees. However, the surface of the water actually emitted traces of cold Qi that could be seen with the naked eye. Even the land next to the pond produced a layer of sparkling ice. The intensity of the pond water's icy coldness could clearly be seen.

Han Li did not pay attention to these few things. What he cared about were the tens of bundles of the short white fluffy grass growing close to the water's edge. The grass stalks had five leaves

and were a pure white all over. They also emitted a faint white Qi that enveloped them like smoke. They truly seemed to have a somewhat spiritual appearance.

“That’s right, this must be the Cold Smoke Grass. It doesn’t differ in the slightest from the information’s description!” Han Li muttered to himself, inwardly rejoicing.

Although this herb had no relation to his Foundation Establishment Pills, him being able to easily acquire this from the start was truly a good omen.

Han Li habitually swept his gaze left and right before walking over. However, his expression suddenly changed. He lowered his body, lightly taking a few steps. After he concealed himself behind a few branches, he expressionlessly looked toward the left side of the dense woods.

Not long after, the silhouette of a person flashed by. A blue-clothed man walked out while looking around. From the look of his clothes, he seems to be someone from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress. This person was extremely careful. With each step, he turned his head three times and incessantly looked in all directions. It seemed he was firmly holding something in his fist; he should have already made preparations for an attack. He walked toward the direction of the “Cold Smoke Grass”.

Han Li sighed. It seemed he would have to retreat without results.

Since the opponent was this cautious, Han Li wouldn't be able to succeed in a sneak attack against him. He did not intend to have a large battle with this person, as braving great dangers for such nonessential items was far from worth it!

“Come out! I've already seen you, stop concealing yourself!” About ten steps away from the Cold Smoke Grass, the blue-clothed man suddenly halted and turned around, loudly shouting those words.

Han Li was frightened. He thought that he had not been careful and left a trace. But immediately after, he could not help but coldly smile because although this blue-clothed man had shouted out loudly, his eyes were looking from place to place. He was basically not looking toward Han Li's hiding spot but was rather spouting out falsehoods.

Han Li happily smiled. He saw that after the blue-clothed man loudly shouted for a while longer, he went to pick the Cold Smoke Grass with relief. The blue-clothed man thought he was clever, but this actually caused Han Li to hesitate in deciding whether or not he should take advantage of the other party's moment of carelessness to approach him from behind.

Han Li's plan was not acted out, however. The blue-clothed man quickly picked three to four clumps of white grass with extremely quick movements. It seemed this person understood that long delays invited trouble.

Han Li inwardly shook his head and decided to retreat. His primary objectives were the three main ingredients for the

Foundation Establishment Pills. Before he fulfilled his goal, it would be best to preserve as much of his strength as possible.

With this thought, Han Li quietly drew away. When he withdrew more than ten Zhang away, he felt at ease to hurriedly rush away and avoid meeting with that person after he finished plucking the medicine.

But Han Li had yet to leave when a scream came from the direction of the pond. It seemed to be the death cry of that blue-clothed man.

Han Li had a cold shiver. After a moment of hesitation, he grit his teeth and turned around. He had to fully understand what had happened so he could avoid falling to the same fate.

When Han Li covertly returned to the vicinity of the pool, two ferocious-looking men appeared at the side of the pond. It seemed these brightly-clothed men were from Spirit Beast Mountain.

At this moment, they were happily digging through the storage pouch of the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple. At their side were over ten large blue toads. The body of the blue-clothed man had over ten large holes in it. He couldn't possibly be more dead.

“Senior Martial Brother Yu, this plan was too clever. When we discovered this idiot, we didn't attack him from the front but instead hurried and hid near [Black Dragon Pond](#). After scattering some beast controlling powder on the water, the nest of Cold Ice Toads obediently listened to us. Hehe. I didn't expect a bit of noise

would draw his attention and allow the demonic beasts to abruptly attack the fellow from behind. A great amount of icicles spouted out, immediately killing this idiot. He probably hadn't even thought he would have been killed by a group of low-level demonic beasts before he died. This fellow truly had quite a bit of wealth on him! Senior Martial Brother, instead of grabbing the medicine, wouldn't it be better to hide here and wait for others to take the Cold Smoke Grass as bait?" After saying this with greed, the younger man firmly kicked the corpse of the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple.

(TL: Fun fact, the "Black Dragon" 乌龙 in Black Dragon Pond is the same Black Dragon 乌龙 (wūlóng) in Oolong Tea.)

Chapter 181: A Fight To The Death And Rainbow Moths

“Humph! In your dreams!”

“You aren’t using your brain to think about it! Us two martial brothers were lucky enough to be transported together. We are already really lucky. At the very least, our chances of survival are much greater. Being able to get rid of this man was just luck. Do you believe I am patient enough to play the game of idly waiting for prey? Don’t be scared of meeting ferocious men and have our teeth throb. Are we not already playing with our lives by entering this place? Besides, how could there be anyone in this damnable place? We should go to the center area as soon as possible and take advantage of the danger. This is the best plan!”

The older Spirit Mountain Disciple was clearly the stronger of the two. He was also much more clever. While he was lecturing him, he was also vigilantly sweeping his eyes over the deep forest in every direction.

Having seen this, Han Li grew even more careful and used his Qi Restraining Technique to its utmost. He also held his breath, not daring to expose himself in the slightest. As for the stupid thought of taking them on by himself, Han Li didn’t even think of it. There was no way he would do something so dumb.

One of the two had magic power at the beginning of the twelfth layer. The other was at the higher step of the twelfth layer. If they were to join hands, he wouldn’t just have little chance of success, he simply wouldn’t be able to resist their great strength.

Thus, Han Li could only stare blankly as the two gathered the very last of the Cold Smoke Grass and set fire to the corpse of the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple. Lastly, the two men stored the Cold Ice Toads into a red-colored storage bag and then disappeared to the other side of the dense forest.

Just after the two departed, Han Li did not immediately walk out. Only after he waited for a moment did he reveal himself from the foliage. After he stood, he looked thoughtfully in the direction of the two people.

It seemed it was more or less like he had thought; there were many like-minded people here.

It was no wonder since these were people who took the risk to participate in the Trial by Blood and Fire. How many of them wouldn't think to go the center for those spiritual items of Heaven and Earth? It would be difficult to avoid battle! After all, spiritual items that reached maturity were truly limited. There were fundamentally not enough for each sect.

Han Li's face darkened. He bitterly thought this while standing in place for a while.

He had witnessed with his own eyes as the blue-clothed person, who was just as careful as himself, silently disappeared from this world. It was unknown how many similar events occurred throughout the forbidden area. This caused Han Li's confidence in fulfilling his objective to sway by no small amount!

He truly did not know whether or not it was a good idea to go on this trip to the forbidden area. Perhaps if he had taken those two Foundation Establishment Pills, he might have been able to reach Foundation Establishment and fundamentally not need brave this strange danger.

Han Li felt discouraged and had a faint notion of retreating. After all, while continuing was easy to say, one's thoughts would be in turmoil with the shadow of death looming in their mind.

After several hours, Han Li left the vicinity and advanced toward the center of the forbidden area.

After a moment of contemplation, Han Li's reason won over. He knew that those recent thoughts of carefulness were only his own weakness looking for an excuse. Thus, he strengthened his mind and resumed walking on the path.

Han Li did not follow behind the two and instead took a detour, indirectly advancing even though the two from Spirit Beast Mountain took the closest and fastest route.

Han Li wasn't being paranoid. With his abilities, the opponents would be able to find him. In addition, he was also fearful of Spirit Beast Mountain's exceptional beast-controlling method. He did not know whether the opponent had any unusual methods of discovering a pursuer, but it would be best to maintain his distance.

It should be known that he originally used the small Cloud-Wing Bird, which had minor human intelligence, to track and monitor specific individuals from a long distance. It could be assumed that Spirit Beast Mountain also had a similar controlling method. Their methods were certain to be even more crafty and covert. After all, they were cultivators; how could the methods of Jiang Hu possibly compare?!

With regards to the Cloud-Wing Bird, Han Li felt a bit of regret. When he entered Yellow Maple Valley, in order to prevent arousing attention, he released the bird into the Tai Yue Mountain Range, allowing it to freely move about.

As a result, the bird frequently returned to look for its master, Han Li, for its favorite food, the “Yellow Chestnut Pill”.

However, after a long period of time, it gradually returned fewer and fewer times. By the time Han Li realized his mistake, the bird had already become wild and had actually flown to some far-away land, never to be seen again. This caused Han Li much heartache as it would have been of much use on this journey within the forbidden area.

What Han Li did not know was that his decision to take a roundabout route truly allowed him to escape calamity.

After the two disciples from Spirit Beast Mountain left the Black Dragon Pond, each of them released Rainbow Moths over a large area.

These beautiful flying insects immediately scattered in every direction, densely spreading over an area of a hundred Zhang. The color of their bodies then gradually changed, slowly matching with its surroundings. The colors of their body blended in so well that they could not be easily seen without a careful examination.

Furthermore, even if a few careful people discovered these moths, they would most likely believe them to be native to the forbidden area and not suspect them.

Thus, these colorful moths became natural sentries for the two. So long as someone entered their range of awareness, they would immediately alert the two and allow them to plan a response in advance.

These numerous insects formed a living alarm network. As alarms, they could be said to be flawless, an expert trick known to Spirit Beast Mountain disciples. Although disciples of their own sect would know of this beforehand, they would have no method of passing through the moths and mounting a sneak attack against the two.

Actually, with regards to Han Li's decision at Black Dragon Pond, it could be considered a great fortune. Those two from Spirit Beast Mountain did not yet release the Rainbow Moths at the pond and only released them after leaving. Otherwise, Han Li would not have escaped their notice.

This wasn't a matter of negligence or forgetfulness. The moths were naturally fearful of the cold. If the temperature was a bit too low, they would freeze and die one by one. It would be truly

regretful for the two.

This Black Dragon Pond's water was of a strange nature and possessed an incomparable coldness. All the land nearby the pool transformed into a winter-like terrain. Under these circumstances, how could they dare to release their Rainbow Moths, only to see them die?

Han Li wasn't aware in the least that his actions had prevented calamity. He was currently standing below a strange cliff, speechlessly looking at two wretched corpses by his feet.

One of the corpses wore black skintight clothes and had a tall and bulky stature with large palms. There was a thin dark-red line of blood across his neck. The eyes were still open with an expression of unwillingness. It seemed he died discontentedly. The body appeared to be that of a Giant Sword Sect disciple.

As for the other body, it was of medium stature and was badly mutilated. What was most significant was its face was not intact. There was a huge sword that was thrust all the way through his head; he had been impaled to the floor with it while he was still alive, causing bits of brain and blood to flow on the ground. However, a strange transparent thread was coiled around the ring finger of his right hand. Underneath the sunlight, he saw a faint flicker.

Han Li carefully studied the corpse of the Giant Sword Sect disciple for a very long time. Then he suddenly lifted the corpse by the tip of its feet and looked toward the red line at the neck, giving the head a light kick. As a result, the large head immediately rolled

to the side. He did not need to use much strength.

This person had long been split in two.

Han Li sighed and looked toward the other corpse. Although he didn't have a face, Han Li already knew his identity since the corpse wore yellow robes similar to his own. There couldn't be stronger proof. However, he did not know which of his Yellow Maple Valley Martial Brothers the corpse belonged to!

He clearly understood that these two died killing each other!

Han Li lifted his head and looked toward the cliff peak without moving. He had already reached a final conclusion. In his mind, he imagined most of what took place between the two.

From all the marks, the Giant Sword Sect disciple should have exceeded the power of Han Li's Senior Martial Brother by an entire layer.

The corpse of the yellow-clothed disciple was badly mutilated and was riddled with injuries. The unreconciled expression on the black-clothed person's head clearly explained this matter.

Although the Senior Martial Brother from his sect was in a disadvantageous position, it was clear this person loved scheming. The only magic tool he used was actually that transparent thread. He definitely made use of his enemy's careless attitude as he was about to win. At the very last moment, he used this item to launch

a sneak attack, severing his opponent's head and killing the Giant Sword Sect disciple.

However, he clearly didn't expect that the black-clothed man had enough strength left to launch his sword before he died. It was unknown whether the Yellow Maple Valley disciple was either too wounded to avoid the strike or if he had made a mistake on the verge of victory, but in the end he was impaled, resulting in a battle without a victor.

Chapter 182: A Young Woman And Thread

Since it was clear how these two had died, Han Li could only pray that his Senior Martial Brother had a pleasant journey to the [yellow springs](#) and would reincarnate soon. Then, with no trace of politeness, he plundered their bodies.

(TL: The yellow springs is part of the Chinese underworld 黄泉)

In any case, these people were already dead. Han Li would naturally kindly accepted their storage pouches.

After a search once through, he couldn't find them!

His expression became grave as he carefully searched through them once more, but he still could not find them!

Han Li felt the hair on his body grow cold and stiff. His heartbeat started to accelerate.

There was actually a fourth person here. It was this person who took away their storage pouches! Although this person had most likely long departed from this place, he could not guarantee that this person was not observing nearby, using these two corpses as bait and waiting for him to make a mistake.

Facing away from the cliff, there was large area of grass, tall enough to hide a man. Han Li was currently half-squatting near the corpses with his back facing the grass. This caused him to be greatly worried! There might be someone hiding behind him.

Han Li didn't move and remained in a squatting position. From behind, it would appear he was still focused on the corpses.

However, he had already quietly taken out magic tools and talismans and used the entirety of his consciousness to silently release his spiritual sense, attempting to find the person who might be hiding there.

The outcome of his spiritual sense search did not surprise Han Li. Everything nearby was normal, and there were no unusual fluctuations of Spiritual Qi.

With nothing being out of the ordinary, there must definitely be someone nearby. This person must be using the "Restraining Breath Technique" to hide their body's magic power, making Han Li naturally unable to find them. The reason why Han Li searched with his spiritual sense was to beat the grass and scare the snake!

TL: 打草惊蛇 "beating the grass to scare the snake"- alerting the enemy as to intimidate or scare them.)

At the very least, the opponent who existed in his thoughts wouldn't dare to act blindly.

The outcomes he truly expected was either that he had scared himself with groundless fears and there was nobody here, or the person who had restrained their breath this entire time and was spying on him would see no opportunity to take advantage of him and therefore would not plan to act.

After a moment, Han Li stood and turned around to the large area of tall grass. After he sized up the area several times with a cold glance, he suddenly leapt away without saying a word, transforming into a black dot as he gradually grew farther away.

When Han Li's figure had completely disappeared without a trace, rustling suddenly came from within the originally peaceful tall grass! A slim figure walked out. It was actually a young girl with fluttering white clothes.

This girl appeared young, only about fifteen to sixteen years old. However, her appearance was pure, and her face appeared innocent and adorable. In this place of life and death, such a fairy-like charmer had appeared! It was truly hard to believe.

From the look of her clothes, she should be affiliated with the Masked Moon Sect!

The young woman looked the direction Han Li disappeared and smiled with pursed lips.

With a voice overflowing with age, she said to herself, "Your bravery and wisdom isn't bad. It's your magic power that's a bit lacking. It seems there is also a large problem with your aptitude. There isn't much potential that can be drawn out. If not for that, you would've surely been one of those who would make it out alive!"

"Regardless, the technique he used to run away seemed to be

Qinggong from the mortal world. Furthermore, it wasn't weak, and was actually truly interesting!" The young woman lightly raised her sharp chin with opened eyes, showing an expression of considerable interest.

If Han Li had heard those words, he would only be stunned with fear.

Her words were far too accurate. With just a few words, she was able to sinisterly point out his strengths and weaknesses as if she understood him more than himself.

"I'll let you go for now. I am still preoccupied with other business! However, the next time I see you, young fellow, I won't let you off so easily." The young woman said with a bit of unwillingness as she wrinkled her nose, creating a mischievous crease.

It was as if Han Li had become her newly acquired toy. She was greatly interested in him, causing her to regret having to leave.

In the end, the young woman pouted with her small mouth and took out a talisman. With a wave of her hand, she was enveloped in dazzling green light and disappeared.

If there was someone present who had saw that scene, they would perhaps immediately feel heartache and loudly curse this woman's clan, hoping it would wither. She actually squandered a talisman that was rarely seen in the cultivation world, a "Wood Evasion Technique" talisman, as she pleased.

That was an elementary mid-grade talisman!

It should be known that if an average person had this Wood Evasion Talisman, although it wasn't enough to be a family heirloom, it was something that could only be used in a matter of life or death since its most optimal use was to escape death.

Han Li did not know any of this, so he naturally felt no heartache. Even more so, he couldn't have known that there was a woman who was greatly interested in him and thought about him often. He still believed that he had lightly escaped from a predicament and was currently rejoicing.

Regardless of whether or not there was truly someone there, Han Li did not intend to look into it further. After all, the closer he approached the central area, the more common enemies would become. They would set up similar ambushes, and attacking others would gradually become a common occurrence.

To preserve his own life, he must spare no effort to avoid all sorts of unnecessary conflict. That was Han Li's current plan of operation.

Besides, it wasn't as if Han Li gained nothing from those two corpses.

With this thought, Han Li held out his hand. There was a ball of transparent thread in his palm. As he departed, he picked up that item in passing; it was the thread-like magic tool that had been

used to kill the Giant Sword Sect Disciple.

Han Li poured a bit of magic power into the magic tool, which gradually became taut and straight. In the end, it unexpectedly became a perfectly straight thread over ten Zhang long. Han Li controlled and waved the thread as he wished for a moment, and he immediately felt that this item had clever uses!

After he was finished, he truly thought this was the perfect weapon for an ambush.

Because of its near invisible properties and its incomparably sharp and completely flexible cuts, Han Li could confidently behead his opponents without them even knowing.

He truly did not know what material was used to refine this thread. If it was able to become even longer, then there would be countless clever uses!

Han Li's mood grew as he willed the thread through more than ten large nearby trees. All of them were cut in two without the slightest resistance. This caused Han Li to be greatly happy as even more uses began to grow in his mind.

Han Li did not know that at this time, near the center of the forbidden area, the disciples of Saber Transformation Dock and the Clear Void Sect were engaged face to face in close combat.

Because each party had five to six people, their strength was

about the same, making them evenly matched.

This was the first large scale deathmatch in the current Trial by Blood and Fire. The reason was so that they would be the first to enter the central area and pick the spiritual medicines. If they were able to extinguish their opponents here, then naturally they would take advantage of their good fortune!

The final outcome was that the skills employed by the Daoist Priests from the Clear Void Sect were a notch higher. After they killed the majority of their opponents, the remaining two from the Saber Transformation Dock fled with injuries. The Clear Void Sect disciples then took the initiative to enter the central area.

Within the central area, not only would there be many wondrous flowers, bizarre fruits, and other spiritual items of Heaven and Earth, there would also be strong grade one demonic beasts guarding those items, powerful enough to go head to head against peak Foundation Establishment disciples.

Every time a demonic beast was killed and the medicine was collected, so long as more spiritual medicines grew, demonic beasts would also indescribably appear, although it wouldn't necessarily be the same kind of demonic beast. This already puzzled the sects' many experts to no end. Could it be the demonic beasts were also born spontaneously from the Spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth? This vastly differed from their previous understanding.

According to their knowledge, demonic beasts should be formed from living wild animals. Only after subconsciously absorbing the essence of the sun and moon for many years would they be able to

occasionally evolve into a demonic beast. The probability of animals evolving was not at all like that of developing cultivators among humans; the animal's odds were far greater.

Furthermore, over the years, each of the sects' disciples were only able to gather spiritual medicines on the outskirts of the central area. If they were to approach closer to the center, they would encounter a few restriction spell and traps, becoming trapped or erased. In addition, the further they entered, the more formidable the demonic beasts became. Since the disciples were minor figures with no method to resist, they could only obediently pace back and forth at the outskirts of the central area.

Regardless if it were Clear Void Sect disciples, not even those who made the first move would be able to take advantage and take the medicines there!

At this moment, Han Li had come across the greatest crisis on his trip within the forbidden area. At some narrow road, there was a Spirit Beast Mountain and a Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple blocking both sides of the road.

Han Li actually recognized the large man from Spirit Beast Mountain. He was that fully bearded man who had been staring at him earlier. Currently, he was looking at Han Li with an evil smile, exposing a "You're already dead" expression.

Chapter 183: Harmonic Spiritual Talisman

Han Li tasted some bitterness from his mouth. He did not think that as greatly careful and tremendously cautious as he was, he would still be ambushed. Furthermore, it was one of the worst possible circumstances, between two people!

Currently, he was in a zone called the “Skyline”. Its environment was extremely dangerous. If one did not use flying magic tools, the entire region only had a narrow small path that led to the central area.

Lining the two sides of the small path were incomparably steep cliffs. Although Han Li was not weak in the light body martial arts of the mortal world, he would not dare to rashly climb them!

As for flying directly over with flying magic tools, the idea was even more absurd. It would be a suicidal action, openly allowing others to launch an attack. Why even think of it!? None of the sects’ disciples would ever perform such folly! Furthermore, the bitter experiences of his predecessors taught him that flying was an absolutely prohibited action in the forbidden area, else one would leave a corpse.

When Han Li entered the vicinity, he hesitated for quite a while. However, he ultimately didn’t dare to take the shortcut by flying over the mountain peak. As a result, he was forced to openly follow the small road on foot.

Naturally, Han Li was completely wary of the dangers in this

area. On the entire way, his nerves were tightly strung. But even so, just when he had walked through the path opening, his path was blocked from the front and back by two people without even the slightest warning.

When Han Li saw the bearded man's fierce expression, he knew that to talk arrogantly at this moment was of no use at all! First he slapped the defensive Water Barrier Talisman on his body, and then he brought out the Flying Dark-Iron Shield. Additionally, he took out the magic tool "Gold Beetle Swarm Blades" and his few elementary high-grade "Earth Prison Technique" talismans.

The fully bearded man and the person behind him looked at Han Li's actions with cold eyes without the slightest intention of stopping or attacking him. It seemed the two were completely confident; they felt entirely certain that they could handle Han Li and appeared calm.

This was no surprise! The person behind him was already at the peak of the twelfth layer. Not to mention the fully bearded man had already cultivated to the thirteenth layer. Facing an eleventh layer fledgeling such as Han Li, they naturally felt that it would be a trivial matter!

When Han Li saw this, he licked his dry lips and inwardly sneered to himself. Since his opponents were so negligent, he would naturally exploit this opportunity.

Thus, remaining completely calm, Han Li faced his body to the side so that his enemies were to his right and left, as if they were horns, to avoid being attacked in the back. As expected, these two

did not take the opportunity to attack jointly.

These were the strongest enemies he had ever faced since he entered the world of cultivation. Even so, Han Li wasn't fearful of them in the least.

Although he did his utmost to avoid fighting with others, it wasn't because he had no confidence in himself. Even though Han Li's magic power was greatly lacking and would be a disadvantage in a battle of attrition, the top quality magic tools and the treasure talisman he possessed were enough to make up for this deficiency.

Furthermore, if it truly did not work out, he could take out the "Heaven's Lightning Child" and eliminate a person. Was that not an easy matter?

But whether or not he was willing to use it was an entirely different matter.

However, Han Li had a bit of doubt. Why would the fully bearded man and the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple not fight one another and instead team up? If they were disciples from the same sect, it would be an ordinary matter. However, these two were obviously not from the same sect!

"Boy, your courage isn't small! Outside the forbidden area, you actually dared to mock me and exchange flirting glances with that sl*t. Now I will take your life as an apology!" The fully bearded man said fiendishly.

Then he turned to the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple and said, “Brother Yan, I have a grudge against this fellow. Hand this person over to me. I want to treat him properly and let him know that you can’t be so reckless in the cultivation world! Before you offend someone in your next life, first remember this before you speak!”

When the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple heard this, he shrugged his shoulders without care and said, “Do as you like. I’ll just stand to the side. However, don’t be like last time and throw him off the edge! Otherwise, you’ll owe me a life-saving favor!”

“Haha, that time was a complete accident! This time I’m handling a fledgeling. If I use half my strength, I’ll have enough to spare!” The fully bearded man’s face was red, but soon after he slanted his mouth and said this with disdain.

“Ke, you should do your best! I truly don’t wish for there to be a day I hear of your death. After all, we’ve been good friends for many years. To find a person of agreeable temperament is truly difficult!”

The Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple shook his head. It seemed the fully bearded man’s arrogance gave him great headaches, but he did not believe that the opponent before him posed any threat to his old friend. Besides, he was attentively watching from the side!

At the side, Han Li did not shut out the two’s dialog and heard it clearly. From the words he heard, the doubts in his heart were cleared.

Unexpectedly, these two were originally friends. Furthermore, their relationship was rather good.

This was rather troublesome! These two were certain to coordinate together against enemies far better than common temporary alliances. Hearing their words, it seemed they had cooperated on more than one occasion!

Han Li couldn't help but feel greatly depressed!

'It seems I can only use the Lightning Child. But first, it's important that I dispose of one of them. Then I will be able to handle the remaining one much more easily! However, this is too strange! Originally, each sect's disciples were randomly transported. How could they happen be transported to the same area and happen to meet? This is truly incredible!' Han Li hatefully thought. He felt greatly indignant toward their luck.

Han Li did not know that the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple had also joyfully thought this in his heart.

When this person saw the fully bearded man walk toward Han Li, his mind couldn't help but think that he was able to meet his good friend due to the great work of the "Harmonic Spiritual Talisman".

'High-grade Harmonic Spiritual Talisman, this item is truly useful. So long as we enter the forbidden area during the same moment and use the talisman at the same time, our Spiritual Qi will temporarily bind together, and the restriction formation will

transport us to the same area. Although I heard the odds of success is fifty percent, the price of the talisman was exceptionally more expensive than ordinary elementary high-grade talismans. But in the end, we were able to wait in that location and successfully ambush several disciples who passed through. It was a great harvest!’

‘Besides, I, Yan, am not foolish! Spending such a large price to brave the strange dangers of the forbidden area, was it not in order to openly kill and plunder the many individuals who were covetously gazing at those spiritual medicines? There will be great harvests without any repercussions. This one is convinced that so long as us two join hands and don’t come across those fierce experts, our objective will be easily and effortlessly accomplished. Then, when it is near the end, we will pull back and find a place to hide. We’ll stay there until it’s time and safely leave! This is truly a flawless plan. Only I could have thought of it!’ The Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple thought of his future prospects after he left and could not help but think beautiful narcissistic thoughts. His mind naturally did not think of the great battle that was about to occur.

At this moment the fully bearded man took out a green leather pouch and sent Han Li an evil grin as he approached. It seemed he wanted to dispose of him.

However, it was unknown if it was because of his good friend’s warning, but he used a talisman halfway,. He became covered in a green-colored light barrier that increased his defense.

Seeing these circumstances, Han Li wrinkled his brow. He had a

bit of a headache!

He was originally going to act fearful of the Spirit Beast Mountain disciple's actions and prepare to make use of this person's negligence, getting rid of this person first. But now that his opponent released a defensive magic technique, this was no longer something he could do in a short amount of time.

Naturally, if he used "Heaven's Lightning Child", this person wouldn't be able to do anything even if he had other methods. However, this was a one time use consumable. If it wasn't a crucial moment of life or death, Han Li would not use it!

Since using it was out of the question, Han Li naturally planned to attack the the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple instead.

He saw that the person had both hands behind his back with his head raised to the sky. He was currently pondering about something, not taking note of anything happening at all. Han Li was exalted; he knew there was an opportunity to exploit!

Without taking the time to think, he used the "Earth Prison Technique" talisman in his hand, throwing it toward the fully bearded man.

As a result, the talisman turned into a stream of yellow light in midair, fiercely shooting toward his opponent. It actually covered the barrier of the fully bearded man's defensive magic technique. It took the shape of a larger yellow barrier and firmly trapped him within, not allowing him to move an inch forward.

Chapter 184: Might Of The Golden Light Brick

When the fully bearded man saw Han Li with his hand still on the talisman, he was not worried. The wood attribute defensive barrier he wore had frightening defensive power that could fundamentally ignore common attacks.

Furthermore, on the basis that his opponent was a novice who cultivated to the eleventh layer, he didn't believe that he could possess a talisman of great strength. At most, it would be an elementary mid-grade talisman.

Because of this, he continued to walk forward without taking notice, opening his pouch as if he were about to bring something out.

But when he was suddenly rooted in place by the yellow light barrier which he recognized as the "Earth Prison Technique", the fully bearded man's expression finally changed, realizing that things had taken a turn for the worse.

At this time, a strange dark green snake with a pair of purple wings leapt out out from his pouch. As soon as it appeared, the snake immediately made a few odd "gua gua" cries and began to viciously attack the yellow barrier, causing the barrier to tremble continuously; its strength was not small.

When the fully bearded man saw this, his spirits were slightly lifted. He took out another pouch to release another spirit beast,

hoping to combine their efforts to break through the earth prison. He was confident that he would be able to escape in a short period of time!

When he escaped, he would definitely pull out his opponent's ribs one by one to quench the hatred in his heart.

Han Li didn't even pay attention to his surrounding enemies; in a swift movement, he rushed towards the man from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress. His movements were quick, and throughout the whole way he seemed to be darting in and out of view, even leaving behind a series of afterimages, making him seem almost phantom-like.

At the same time, Han Li gently patted the storage pouch near his waist. The original "Gold Beetle Swarm Blades" suddenly switched with another similarly small magic tool that he clutched tightly in his hand.

At this time, the man from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress finally awoke from his beautiful dream, instantly seeing the strange scene unfolding in front of him. His expression changed dramatically. He hurriedly backed up and flipped his palm, causing a talisman to appear.

Meanwhile, Han Li was still at least eight to nine Zhang away from him. The man relaxed, thinking that there was more than enough time to cast the talisman.

However, before he was able to use his spiritual power to activate

the talisman, he was stunned to see that the charging Han Li suddenly smiled mysteriously at him. In turn, one of Han Li's hands gently waved at him, a movement similar to a greeting between two familiar friends. At the same time, he also felt a slight itch on his neck, as if he had been bitten by a mosquito.

The man from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress stared blankly, yet to realize the other side's intention. In a moment of turmoil, his eyes dimmed as he lost consciousness.

“Brother Yan!”

Standing off to the side, the fully bearded man from Spirit Beast Mountain involuntarily cried out with wide eyes, having seen the whole thing clearly.

He personally saw that Han Li, while he was still a few Zhang away, had simply waved his hand, causing the head of his close friend of many years to fall. His friend's head rolled on the ground with a “gu lu lu” sound, separated from his body. The now headless body, however, continued to back up a few steps until it fell over on the ground, blood spurting from its neck about a few feet high with “hu hu” sounds.

The fully bearded man suddenly felt his hands and feet turn ice cold, and cold sweat formed on his back.

The methods the opponent used to kill his friend were too demonic! He had seen clearly that his friend was killed without contact, and the opponent for sure hadn't used any kind of magic

technique.

“Boy, as soon as I get out I will hack you to pieces!” Although he felt beads of cold sweat exuding from his forehead and was filled with grief for his friend, the fully bearded man maintained a menacing attitude to strengthen his courage, bracing himself and standing firm.

In actuality, however, he had decided in his heart that as soon as he escaped from the Earth Prison Technique, he would immediately run far away, biding his time. Revenge was a dish best served cold, after all!

The boy in front of him was too strange. Not only did he have the high grade Earth Prison Technique talisman, but he also could kill people with invisible weapons, making him truly difficult to deal with! Getting revenge for his friend is indeed important, but first he must preserve his own life!

It turned out that the seemingly ferocious fully bearded man was actually a person as cowardly as a mouse that bullied the weak yet feared the strong! Most people would be surprised by this!

Of course, Han Li had no way of knowing his opponent's thoughts; all he saw was that the opponent had released another pangolin-like beast that, along with that strange snake, had begun to fiercely attack the yellow barrier. The fully bearded man had also taken out a pair of iron-rod-like magic tools to aid the two beasts in smashing the barrier, causing it to flicker with light incessantly.

The Earth Prison Technique could not be maintained for much longer!

As soon as Han Li realized this, he took out his “Golden Light Brick” treasure talisman with one hand, bringing it in front of his eyes and staring at it intently in order to activate it. If he were to use any other normal magic tool, he simply could not feel at ease! His opponent, after all, was a thirteenth layer expert; if he was unable to kill him with one blow, there would be big trouble when his opponent escaped! Until now, he still remembered the exhausting battle with Senior Martial Brother Lu – and at that time Senior Martial Brother Lu had only been at the twelfth layer!

Despite this, he had not expected that he could actually use the transparent thread to finish off a twelfth layer opponent. However, the fully bearded man was already on guard and would not be defeated so easily!

The fully bearded man under the Earth Prison Technique, seeing the weird movements of the talisman in Han Li’s hands, felt his heart tense. He tightened his grip on the pair of black iron cudgels. But the yellow barrier of the Earth Prison Technique was extremely strong! Even if it had changed shape and darkened to the point of being in danger of fracturing, it continued to maintain its integrity! Upon seeing this, the fully bearded man became so angry that he almost vomited blood!

At this time, he suddenly felt a gust of an astonishing amount of spirit power rocketing up from Han Li’s direction. He couldn’t help but slowly turn his body and look in his direction.

He saw Han Li's hand emitting a strong golden light, and a lustrous, shining golden rectangular object slowly rose up, floating in midair.

“Treasure talisman.”

The fully bearded man's expression changed dramatically, and he began to yell in terror. He had realized the nature of the Golden Light Brick.

What he didn't know, however, was that Han Li's face at this moment was also deathly pale with alarm. The floating object was furiously draining all of his inner magic power steadily, without any way of stopping it; it seemed as if it would suck him dry.

The quietly complaining Han Li, as he was suffering, began to curse the store that had sold him this item, ‘How is this a treasure talisman? It's clearly a leech that wants to kill me!’

However, when a third of his magic power had been drained, the treasure talisman finally stopped its wild movements and calmed down. Control over it once again returned to Han Li.

At this time, Han Li did not hesitate and pointed, causing the Golden Light Brick treasure talisman to immediately shoot out. It flew straight towards the fully bearded man, who was still trapped under the Earth Prison Technique. His face became ashen from fright.

The golden brick began to expand, and in the blink of an eye, it became as large as a room. Spiritual Qi revolved around it and radiated golden light in all directions; its pressure was truly astonishing. When it reached the fully bearded man's forehead, the golden brick was like a small mountain in size, and it came down with a violent clap.

Peng!

“Ah!”

After the loud sound and fully bearded man's blood-curdling scream, the entire earth shook violently.

Han Li was both surprised and happy; his expression was somewhat strange.

Was it really possible to eliminate a thirteenth layer disciple that easily? Han Li had some doubts.

As soon as he retrieved the treasure talisman, the Golden Light Brick immediately returned to its original form and flew back into Han Li's hand. An extremely large crater had formed in the place where the golden brick had slammed into the ground, almost ten Zhang wide and one Zhang deep! As for the fully bearded man and his spirit beasts, they had become a pile of mud, indistinguishable from one another.

The fully bearded man really had been killed! Han Li was at a loss. It was as if he couldn't resist a single strike in the slightest.

Was it that the fully bearded man was too weak or that the Golden Light Brick was simply too strong? Han Li was unable to decide. However, after generating such a loud noise, it was no longer safe to stay in this place!

Han Li quickly became sober. After he destroyed the two corpses, he took the five or six storage pouches and left the area, leaving the Skyline.

Continuing to walk forward would most likely have led to a large forest, which was incidentally also an ideal place to ambush and kill people. Perhaps after entering the forest there would be another fierce battle waiting for him. Thus, before entering, he decided to find a place to rest a little and restore his magic power in order to protect himself.

Chapter 185: The Strong

While Han Li was on the outer edges of the forest, he found a dense, large tree. When he jumped on top of the tree to recover his strength, the entire forbidden area had reached the first climax of the Trial of Blood and Fire's massacre.

Various strong individuals revealed their fangs one by one and began to purge the nearby weaklings. The closer they were to the center of the area, the more frequent and bloody the massacres became.

Of course, "experts" of equivalent strength would occasionally run into each other. They would look past the other person and reach a wordless, mutual understanding, simply brushing past one another. It was not time for them to do battle yet.

With this said, of the many disciples from various sects in the forbidden area, the majority could be divided into three types of people!

One kind was those who were extremely weak, people whose cultivation were only around the eleventh or even tenth layer.

They all had very different reasons for entering this forbidden area; if it wasn't because of hardships against their will, it was because they were forced, or it was because they were hopeful in their luck to take advantage of a crisis for their own gain. Regardless of their reasons, they were all part of the bloody massacre's lowest level, only able to play the role of being

slaughtered.

Often after the first day in this forbidden area—apart from a few people with the most clever and particular self-preservation methods—these weaklings were almost completely purged by others.

Of course, people like Han Li could rely on strange treasures and fierce incisiveness, but he could be considered an exception!

The second kind of person were like the fully bearded man; although their magic power was not weak, their self-regard and strength could not compare with the experts, and they were aware that to obtain a spiritual item was beyond hope. They were unwilling to battle with the highest-layer experts inside the forbidden area for the spiritual herbs, instead turning their attention to the first type of people. They intended to use this opportunity to kill these people and steal their treasures, quietly becoming very rich.

These kinds of people inside of the Trial of Blood and Fire, for the first two days, were quite active. When the third day began, however, the remaining victors would automatically lie low in the forbidden area, refusing to reveal themselves anymore.

This was because they were very clear that after the third day it was time for the “experts” to have showdowns with one another. If these middle-strength people ran into such an expert during this time, it would absolutely be a one-way trip to death.

Of course, there were also a few who were either arrogant or did not have a grasp of their own strength and would charge directly into center of the battle for the spiritual medicines. Their bodies would never be found.

However, most of the people grabbed opportunities early and withdrew quickly, and were often the most common type of person in the Trial of Blood and Fire. In contrast, the strongest individuals would die tragically one by one, as if part of some kind of joke.

Thus, the last type of people became the least common.

These people were at the top of the pyramid, and they were the most elite disciples of the various sects that had entered the forbidden area. They were the ones that the various sects had placed their high hopes on. As for the other disciples of the same schools, they were at the most cannon fodder, meant to aid the plans of their various sects!

This group was elite—their magic power was profound, complemented by magic tools with astonishing power! They only had one goal, which was to kill all the disciples of other sects and steal away enough spiritual medicine!

The extent of the first massacre at the start lay in their mutual, wordless understanding to first get rid of the trash and all those who were only there to take advantage of the situation. This was to prevent these people from obstructing their movements and, in general, any problems from sprouting up.

In addition, the news that someone had been one step in front of them to the central area did not make them panic or become edgy. Entering it was easy, but if they wanted to bring spiritual medicine out, that would be incredibly difficult!

The massacre continued to progress, but because Han Li was still a distance away from the central area, he was still not able to involve his recovered self.

However, other weaker members were not as lucky as Han Li, and many were brought into the middle of the massacre even as they desperately struggled to free themselves to protect their own lives!

And Saber Transformation Dock's Su Er was one of these people.

Today, Su Er's face was deathly pale, staring at the person in front of him with an expression of pure terror. This person was big and was carrying a giant silver sword.

It was this person who had, right in front of Su Er, already killed the other two disciples from Saber Transformation Dock. Under his giant silver sword, it didn't matter what kind of high-grade weapon and protective armors were used; it was as if they couldn't even withstand one attack, being ripped apart one by one as if they were thin paper. They were inevitably sliced in two.

However, it was because there were those two other disciples from the same sect that Su Er, seeing that the situation was far from good, seized the opportunity to slip away, falling into

confusion as he ran.

Unfortunately, the big man didn't seem to have the idea of letting him go, instead persistently chasing him for a few dozens of hours and finally catching up to him here. This caused him to thoroughly lose hope!

“If you kill yourself, I can leave you an intact corpse!” said the big guy expressionlessly and with a cold glare.

“You... you can go die!”

In the midst of his hopeless situation, Su Er, who knew that he would not live much longer, erupted in fighting spirit. He took the only two high-grade magic tools he had on him and, in one breath, threw them all out.

“Idiot!”

The big guy spoke this very deliberately. Next, the huge silver sword flew from his back into the air. As if without effort, the two magic tools were broken into pieces; in the same motion, Su Er was also cut into two pieces.

After finishing all of this, the big guy did not even bother to look at Su Er's corpse; instead, he spun on his heel and left without even the idea of moving towards the storage pouch. To him, the only magic tool he needed was the huge silver sword! Any other magic tool or precious item would only distract him and would be a big

hindrance to his cultivation!

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At the same time, at a small brook near the central area, a female disciple of the Masked Moon Sect controlled a magic tool like a scarf while drenched in sweat. She was currently bitterly defending herself from two red, shiny daggers, but it seemed as if at any moment she would be unable to defend herself any longer.

“Could this Senior Martial Brother wielding daggers please let this Junior Martial Sister go? I am willing to serve Senior Martial Brother with my body tonight!”

Since this woman was at death’s door and was past caring about shame, she used a woman’s greatest advantage and tried to seduce him. But would it succeed? Based on their encounters and the tactics he had used, she had absolutely no idea.

“Okay, you withdraw your magic tools and I’ll agree!” The person speaking was an eighteen or nineteen year-old male wearing a earthy-colored robe. He had delicate features, red cheeks and white teeth, all the characteristics of a delicate, handsome male.

Having said this, he stopped his two daggers in midair and lightly smiled at the woman.

The Masked Moon Sect female was delighted and hurriedly gave

him two winks. She hesitated for a moment, then slowly allowed the scarf to descend, retrieving it into her hand. Then, she stuck her breasts out, as if she was about to say something.

Unfortunately, before she could open her lips, the handsome male's face suddenly expressed a killing intent. His finger violently pointed, and in a surprising turn of events, two red flying daggers immediately cut in a criss-cross. The woman, without a whisper, fell to the ground, fresh blood puddling on the floor.

“Sl*t! Even someone as common and unrefined as you thinks that they can seduce me, Han Tianya!”

(Note: The Han (寒) used here is different from Han Li's surname(韩).)

The handsome male's face bore an expression of disgust, his voice suddenly becoming intense. Next, he took out a pleasant-smelling handkerchief from his waist, delicately wiping the dust on his face. His movements were very gentle and reserved, as if he were an unmarried daughter of a noble household.

“I should hasten my journey; perhaps there will be others along the road who will also provide some entertainment!”

After thinking this aloud, the male carelessly tossed the handkerchief he had used to wipe himself onto the female's face, leaving with a swagger.

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Deep in the forest, a disciple of the Spirit Beast Mountain lay dead on the ground. A yellow-robed, middle-aged man stood nearby. He was currently shaking his head and staring at the sky, mumbling something to himself. Behind him were a few extremely fierce beasts lying on the ground, not moving, without a breath!

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On top of the barren mountain, an ugly-faced, green-robed man was frantically controlling about a large swarm of huge bees, besieging a few people dressed like Daoists.

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Just like that, the strong massacring the weak could be found everywhere in the forbidden area. Although Han Li did not see all of this, he could faintly perceive a trace smell of carnage floating through the air.

However, he had no time to look into the whole story, instead sitting on the treetop without moving, gradually restoring the magic power in his body.

The time passed by very quickly, and more than half of the first night in the forbidden area had already gone by. What shocked Han Li was that in this area, the amount of extremely bright light was the same during both daytime and nighttime. The entire sky

was always an overcast color, making people who saw it feel somewhat unsettled.

When his magic power had been restored enough and as Han Li was rejoicing quietly in his heart, the sound of hurried footsteps and heavy gasps suddenly came from far away, slowly getting closer. It was as if there was someone running towards the very tree that Han Li was meditating on.

Chapter 186: Making A Move

The corners of Han Li's mouth moved slightly. He couldn't help but curse in his heart, but his tightly closed eyes had no choice but to open.

Although his magic power was still a tiny fraction from being fully restored, there was a person coming his way. He didn't dare arrogantly continue to meditate, especially under conditions where he didn't know how things stood with the person who was coming!

“Which Senior Martial Brother is here? Quickly save this Little Sister!”

A woman wearing yellow robes came running out from the nearby forest, staggering to the bottom of the tree where Han Li was. She wore an expression of panic and raised her head to the treetop, calling for help. It was as if she had determined that up there was her own knight in shining armor. Not too far behind her, a person's white shadow walked over unhurriedly. Their behavior sharply differed from the woman's terrified appearance, as if they were feeling quite leisurely!

Seeing all this, Han Li rolled his eyes. He was very unhappy with this woman's behavior of inviting disaster. As for the her ability to discover the whereabouts of his hiding place, he did not consider it unexpected.

Before all of the Yellow Maple Valley disciples had departed, Sect

Leader Zhong Lingdao made use of a type of “pulling” magic that allowed these disciples, within a certain range, to perceive each other’s position. Of course, this magic had a time limit on it, being only effective for ten days. The purpose of this magic was to allow disciples of their own sect to support each other, thus greatly increasing their likelihood of success.

It is said that the disciples of other sects were also under the effects of a similar magic technique.

Han Li, having no choice, gave the woman a glance.

He actually recognized her; she was a fellow female disciple that stood together with Junior Martial Sister Chen. Apart from her figure, which could comparatively stir up many fires, her appearance was extremely plain.

After Han Li had coldly stared at the woman’s desperately pleading appearance, he in fact did not carelessly and immediately jump off the tree. Instead, he closely sized up the white shadow following her through a very small gap in the leaves.

Regardless of whether he saved the woman or not, Han Li wanted to gauge whether the magic power of the oncoming person was strong or weak before deciding. He did not want to stake his own small life for a woman who was a total stranger.

If the white shadow’s magic power was average, Han Li would of course make a move and kill them without any respect, thus acting as a “hero saving a beauty”. However, if their magic power was

frighteningly deep, Han Li had to carefully consider whether he would join up with the woman under the tree to escape together, or if he would instantly escape without a trace!

However, to prepare for any situation, he still placed his hand on top of his storage pouch, retrieving the “Golden Beetle Swarm Mother Blade” magic tool and a defensive talisman. In addition, he took the nameless transparent thread and deftly wrapped it around his finger.

“Zeze, your running looks really ugly! Are all of Yellow Maple Valley’s female disciples as useless as you?”

The white shadow slowly walked closer, revealing their real face; in fact, it was a woman in her prime, wearing a white, flowing shirt. Her face also had some pleasant features, but her two eyebrows were slightly lifted, and she wore an evil expression.

Although she spoke this word to the yellow-robed female under the tree, her eyes with killing intent kept drifting towards the top of the tree. It was evident that she was not as arrogant as she had said about herself; she still had some misgivings towards the hidden Han Li who would not reveal himself!

“Twelfth layer cultivation.”

Having easily seen the opponent’s cultivation depth, Han Li’s heart let out a breath.

However, he still had a few suspicions. The disciple of the same sect under the tree also had a twelfth layer cultivation, so how had she been chased to this miserable state! Did the opponent have some particular trick or some kind of strong magic tool?

As Han Li was puzzling over this matter, the white clothed female coldly made a “Heng” noise. Suddenly, her sleeves were flung out, and two streaks of white light came flying out, directly rushing towards the yellow-robed female.

“Senior Martial Brother save me! My magic tools are all destroyed and I can’t protect myself!” The yellow-robed female’s face drained of color, and she quickly cried out.

These words had just left her mouth when two streaks of golden light came down like lasers from the treetop, meeting the white light halfway there and fighting it. It was Han Li who had activated the “Golden Beetle Swarm Mother Blade” in his hand , and the two golden streaks were merely two of the blades.

The yellow-robed female looked delighted, finally calming down.

The only reason Han Li made a move was because on one hand, the white clothed female was not so scary and that he could deal with her; on the other hand, it was so that he could find a helper for the rest of his journey to prevent him from going alone against enemies. After all, a twelfth layer cultivator from the same sect would have use in future battles!

“Finally you are willing to make a move! I thought that your

esteemed self would continue to act mute and dumb!” The white-clothed female said mockingly. Her face did not show any kind of surprise, but spreading her hand, a huge sphere of fiery light came charging directly towards the treetop.

With a rumbling sound, the top half of the big tree emitted a bright red light, turning into ash in the blink of an eye. However, there was still no sign of anyone appearing, causing the white-clothed female to stare blankly.

“What a powerful, large fireball talisman, and this young lady was actually willing to part with it!” Han Li said with an enigmatic smile. Han Li’s figure suddenly appeared from behind the half burnt tree.

“Eleventh layer cultivation?”

The white-clothed female first stared blankly then revealed a disdainful expression.

This occurred just as the yellow-robed female’s expression had begun to relax, and she instantly started to panic, quietly complaining incessantly in her heart. She had originally thought that he was an expert Senior Martial Brother from her sect, but didn’t expect that it would actually be a novice Junior Martial Brother whose magic power was not even as strong as hers.

“If you had just obediently hidden on the side and watched, perhaps this young lady would have been in a better mood and had mercy on you. But since you made a move, then both of you can

stay lovers in death!” The white clothed female said sinisterly as her two eyebrows stood straight and became more violent. She allowed her originally somewhat graceful appearance to become malevolent.

Han Li smiled lightly, and wordlessly controlling the vibrations of the golden blades, carelessly walking towards the woman.

“Stand still, what are you trying to do?”

The white-clothed female quick-wittedly shouted out, raising her hand and patting a protective talisman on her body to set up a barrier.

At this time, Han Li was only twenty Zhang away from her! This made him feel that it was a big pity!

In fact, the last time he used the transparent strand, after he had easily killed the Heavenly Imperial Fortress, Han Li had taken a great interest in this kind of battle tactic. When he was on top of the tree, he saw that the white-clothed female had not setup any defensive-type magic. Hit by a bout of inspiration, he naturally wanted to recreate the scene from last time.

Unfortunately, the opponent was very alert, having determined that something was not right very early on and quickly closed up this loophole. What caused Han Li to raise his head and sigh loudly was that females were indeed much more cautious than males!

Since pulling a trick wouldn't work, naturally only using force remained.

The previously disappointed Han Li did not waste any more words. After casting his defensive magic, he gently shook the Golden Beetle Mother Blade in his hand and viciously leapt towards his opponent.

The yellow-robed woman saw that Han Li's magic tool was not ordinary, and moved with newfound initiative. Han Li immediately threw out a talisman, which became a long fire snake that shot out in that direction.

The white-clothed female began to laugh coldly; her lily-white hands lightly propped up a palm-sized small mirror that appeared in her hands.

She lightly shined the mirror, and a beam of greenish light shot out, blocking the oncoming golden blades and fire snake. Stopped in midair, the blades and the snake were left to spin aimlessly and were incapable of dropping, as if they were restricted by a spell.

Han Li's eyes were straight! What was this magic tool? How was it so unnatural? Seeing as this magic tool could freeze in place the magic tools and magic skills of others, was it even possible to battle?

“Don't worry Junior Martial Brother, her magic tool can only freeze one area at a time, and every time it can only freeze for a quarter of an hour and a half before it loses its effectiveness!” The

yellow-robed female, seeing Han Li's shock, immediately consoled him.

Only after hearing this was Han Li able to calm down, but the next sentence that the female disciple from the same sect said immediately caused Han Li's heart to once again jump.

“However, this evil woman is the descendant of one of Masked Moon Sect's elders and has many strange magic tools that have been passed down to her. It would be best for Junior Martial Brother to be even more careful!”

Han Li was speechless.

“No wonder that of the two twelfth layer female disciples, this Senior Martial Sister from the same sect, would lose in such a sorry way. In fact, the opponent is a woman with many treasures! If I had known earlier, I wouldn't have jumped out and shown off as a hero!” Han Li already felt great regret, realizing that most likely another fierce battle was about to begin!

Chapter 187: Yellow Freckled “Feng Yue”

The white-clothed woman, seeing that her magic tool was effective and had blocked Han Li’s gold blade, revealed a content expression on her face.

“I was wondering why you would jump out as if you had overestimated your abilities! It turns out that you have a top quality magic tool!” she laughed derisively. However without hesitation, she flipped her hand again, revealing a pink-colored crystal ball. She held it out and pressed it on her forehead.

“Not good, this crystal ball can corrode other people’s magic tools. Junior Martial Brother, stop her quickly; all of my magic tools were destroyed in this manner,” the yellow-robed female hastily warned as her face’s color greatly changed.

Han Li’s heart thumped once, and he raised his hand without thinking, throwing out the silver hook that he had just wrapped in his hand. The hook became a streak of silver light and flew towards the female’s crystal ball.

The white-clothed female’s mouth slightly slanted, and her ten fingers pinched together a strange incantation gesture. She hit the crystal ball on her forehead with a streak of red light.

As a result, the crystal ball that had sucked in the magic power began to emit large amounts of red light and began to spin on its own. Then, it spurted forth streams of pink liquid, which took the shape of a liquid cloud with the round ball as its center. Although

it was only a few Zhang wide, it covered the space above the woman in a bright red sheet.

Han Li hesitated for a moment, unwilling to allow the silver hook to shoot into the red liquid so easily. Instead, he maneuvered it into dipping downwards, heading directly for the white-clothed woman underneath.

At the same time, he also took another high quality magic tool—an azure rope. He quietly threw it out, as sneakily as if it were a spirit snake. The rope stuck closely to the ground and silently advanced forward.

“Decay!”

The white-clothed female suddenly pointed the crystal ball, and the cloud of liquid immediately split off a small piece, which flew to the ground. In an instant, it wrapped up the white light passing from below into itself and caused it to decelerate enough to reveal the silver hook’s original shape!

Seeing all of this, Han Li grew anxious in his heart. However, he bluntly decided to abandon the silver hook. Soon after, he hurried the azure rope to stealthily and securely tie up the white-clothed woman, temporarily tying both her and her barrier into a large [sticky rice dumpling](#). Although the white-clothed woman had numerous magical treasures, she was caught up in a moment of flustered confusion and was unable to immediately struggle free.

At this very moment, Han Li fished out the “Golden Light Brick”

treasure talisman without hesitation!

Although Han Li had no idea how long the azure rope could bind the opponent, he could only take a risk and attempt it. Hopefully, he could use the treasure talisman to kill the opponent before she was able to escape from being bound.

The yellow-robed female, although she appeared to be plain, was actually somewhat quick-witted! Although she no longer had any magic tools or strong talismans left, she still continue to use small magic spells, such as a few large fireballs or ice hammers and the like, continuing to attack the liquid binding the silver hook without stopping as well as that small mirror. She hoped that she could save a few of Han Li's magic tools in order to increase their chances of success.

Unfortunately, these kinds of attacks were at most attempts at ineffective solutions and had little effect.

“Humph, you want to bind me with trifling high-grade magic tools? In a moment I will make you recognize your own idiocy!” Despite being bound by the azure rope, the white-clothed woman still spoke this with unrivaled arrogance.

Han Li was disinclined to respond to his opponent, instead picking up his “Golden Light Brick” treasure talisman, steeling himself for the experience of having his magic power savagely sucked away again.

But at that moment, from the thick forest behind the woman

suddenly exploded a huge amount of Spiritual Qi from a terrifying source.

Han Li stared blankly; before he was able to react to what had happened, a yellow tip streaked by flashily, shooting out from the depths of the forest like lightning. In an instant, the streak shockingly penetrated through Han Li's azure rope, the woman's barrier, and the white-clothed woman herself. Before the white-clothed woman was even able to cry out, her body had already toppled over where she had stood.

Han Li's initial reaction to this scene was one of shock, but he quickly thought of something and wanted to act; however, it was already too late.

A blue shadow flashed a few times, as if it were a meteor chasing the moon, and appeared next to the corpse of the woman. In one swift motion, he ripped off the storage pouch on her waist and began laughing loudly, revealing an expression of ecstasy.

Having already been a step too late, Han Li sighed, vexed. However, thinking of his own small life, he still strongly braced himself, coldly gazing at this person's every move.

The arriving person was a middle-aged man whose face was full of scars. His two eyebrows were slender, and he had a nose hooked like an eagle's beak. His whole body contained an evil Qi, causing people who saw him to immediately tremble and want to show respect from a distance. Han Li, upon seeing that his cultivation was actually at the peak of the thirteenth layer, felt a heaviness in his heart.

“Feng Yue, you are the savage Feng Yue of the Heavenly Imperial Fortress!”

Unexpectedly, before the blue-clothed person was able to open his mouth, the yellow-robed female yelled out in dismay. The expression on her face was as if she had just met one of the scariest demons! She was even much more afraid than when they had been chased by the white-clothed female.

“Hehe! I didn’t expect that this girl would recognize this uncle and obediently stand there! After uncle sees how the harvest is, I’ll come to deal with you!” The blue-clothed person merely glanced at the yellow-robed female before lowering his head and searching through the storage pouch right before their eyes.

Han Li rubbed his nose and dully watched this person as his eyes flickered. Although he didn’t know the great origins of this person, he was greatly displeased with the Senior Martial Sister’s habit of making a big fuss out of nothing!

As far as Han Li was concerned, it didn’t matter who the oncoming person was; his own position could not become disordered. The stronger the enemy, the more he had to remain calm!

He glanced at the magic tools that were now free and stretched out his hand, causing the golden blade and silver hook to return to him.

The golden blade was still alright and was as new as it was before, but the silver hook's appearance gave Han Li quite a fright! The previously shiny, silver magic tool was stained with spots of rust and was riddled with holes. It was now similar to a ruined edge and had lost much of its Spiritual Qi, drastically reducing its usefulness.

It was at this time that Han Li realized what the yellow-robed female had meant when she had talked about magic tools being ruined; the pink liquid the crystal ball had spurted out was incredibly ruthless! If anyone's magic tool touched it, it would likely need to retreat three feet!

The regretful Han Li was attracted once more to the dazzling yellow light in front of the blue-clothed person.

This was a weirdly shaped small blade with a shaft; the shaft was at least a foot, but the blade was only about three or four inches. The whole blade was translucent and incisive, releasing a glaring yellow light.

It was this type of strange object that had hit and slain the white-clothed woman in one hit.

Han Li stared intently at this item; his expression slowly became gloomy, figurative black clouds gathered overhead on his face, and his mouth was tightly pressed together. However, the two words "treasure talisman" kept flashing through his head unstoppably.

Judging from the small blade's power, which approximately

matched that of its radiant appearance, and it's frightening explosion of Spiritual Qi, all the evidence pointed to the item being similar to his "Golden Light Brick". It was a treasure talisman that possessed the power of a magic treasure.

This realization filled Han Li's mouth with a taste of bitterness!

He raised his head and gazed at the mixed yellow sky. Although he could not tell what period of time it was, he was confident it was already the morning of the second day. He was wondering if his own luck had been wasted all during the first day so that on the morning of the second day, he would run into such terrible luck!

First, he encountered a Senior Martial Sister from the same sect, forcefully turning him into a shield and causing him to become the opponent of the female from the Masked Moon Sect who had many treasures. In the end, her top grade magic tool had been powerful beyond compare, and he almost had no way to deal with it!

Now, some madman Feng Yue had also arrived; not only was his magic power much higher than his own, he also had a treasure talisman on him. All of these made him more powerful than the jade-stealing woman by a significant amount! How could he possibly escape from this situation?

He didn't reckon that this madman would spare the two of them merely because of a good mood. It seemed like he could only fight with all his might!

As Han Li was thinking this, the opposing Feng Yue had finally finished thoroughly searching the storage pouch. He lifted up his head with an expression of light happiness; it seemed that his harvest was not small!

He laughed maliciously and was about to say something to Han Li and the woman, but then he noticed the small mirror and crystal ball that had fallen on the ground. His eyes flashed with greed and he waved his hand, wanting to suck the two magic tools into his hand.

Unfortunately, before the two magic tools had taken flight, a tiny, tiny fireball came flying over from far away and disrupted the movement of retrieving the magic tools. This forced him to back up a step and, in one wave of his hand, release a similar fireball to attack it. This caused Feng Yue's to become extremely angry in his heart, and his face revealed an extremely ferocious look!

This fireball had been released by Han Li. After seeing the power of the small mirror and the crystal ball, how could he allow them to land in the opponent's hands? The yellow-robed female, on the other hand, had been frightened by Han Li's movements, almost crying out!

Feng Yue slowly turned to look at Han Li. The scars on his face began to move, as if they were individual, living earthworms, causing people to tremble with fear.

“How do you want to die! Is it for me to cut you into pieces, one

piece at a time, or do you want me to cook you inch by inch with a large fire?”

When the yellow-robed female heard this, her body trembled, and her face became deathly pale beyond comparison. She could no longer withstand the fear in her heart, and she secretly looked around to her left and right, beginning to come up with other ideas.

“I want you to die!” Han Li replied with a light smile. His smile was very natural and lighthearted!

Chapter 188: A Bad Reputation

Feng Yue's ugly face was extremely unsightly; he had never imagined that the opponent would actually dare to mock him. The rage in his heart suddenly began to soar.

Although he wasn't yet Foundation Establishment, by relying on a few decent magic tools and cruel, savage methods, his fearful name was widespread among the lower-level disciples!

One should know that in order to get revenge, he shut other cultivators into some dark room and tortured them constantly for three days and three nights. Their piteous cries rang out day and night without stopping before they were viciously slain.

Normally, when ordinary disciples heard his name, their faces would become deathly pale, and they would immediately retreat far away.

With this evil reputation, he should have long been finished off by Foundation Establishment experts who found him displeasing to the eye. However, he was also extremely clever; although he was incomparably savage to lower-layered cultivators, he would flee as soon as he caught wind of someone whose power greatly surpassed his own. He would escape back to the Heavenly Imperial Fortress and hide out; the people in the Heavenly Imperial Fortress, to protect their reputation, naturally would not deliver him up.

As such, those pursuing him often would refrain from harming innocents to chase him. They could only stare at him, watching

him act freely and leisurely.

After waiting for those pursuing him to lose interest, Feng Yue would again arrogantly exit the fort, continuing to cruelly treat other cultivators. After this had happened a few times, those experts could only [pinch their noses](#) and were disinterested in involving themselves again! Feng Yue also knew his place and would not attack those from important backgrounds and those intimate to them.

(TL: pinch their noses means to ignore it, like a stinky smell.)

As such, Feng Yue's behavior within the Seven Great Sects became increasingly ferocious and bold, and his evil name spread far and wide! This made his personality even more unrestrained, and he became incredibly conceited, adopting an arrogant and violent attitude! He did not have a shred of respect for any of the low-layered cultivators other than a few disciples from his sect whose reputations were not below his.

But today, Han Li, an eleventh layer rookie, went so far as to say he wanted to kill him! How could the arrogant and accustomed Feng Yue contain his rage!

“You're courting death!”

The agitated Feng Yue was not willing to allow Han Li to speak for even one more second; he touched the small blade in front of him, and it became a streak of yellow light, flying directly at Han Li's forehead. He had decided to cut off the opponent's head in one move. He believed that, although the opponent had set up a blue,

water-based barrier, the barrier would break under one attack of his own treasure talisman, and the person inside it would die.

Han Li, of course, would not allow the opponent to do whatever he wanted. He sneakily raised his hand, throwing out a small, black shield that began to expand on its own after leaving his hand. The yellow streak was firmly blocked outside at roughly a distance two Zhang away.

As soon as the small blade's yellow streak and the black light on the shield collided, several "zhi zhi" sounds were emitted. Although the yellow streak immediately gained the upper hand and forced the black light to steadily retreat, the small shield, unwilling to be outdone, continued to emit black light, tenaciously resisting the yellow streak.

At this point, the yellow streak would be unable to break through and enter in any short amount of time.

Seeing this, Feng Yue's expression was one of shock, while Han Li sighed lightly.

Feng Yue didn't expect that Han Li would have a rare, top quality defensive magic tool; at the same time, Han Li felt reassured because his previous guess had been correct.

His use of the Flying Dark-Iron Shield to directly counter the opponent's treasure talisman with force had actually been quite risky. If the opponent's treasure talisman was powerful beyond his expectations, then his head would have hit the ground a long time

ago.

When Han Li and “Senior Martial Brother Lu” had battled, the Azure Flood Dragon Banner had been able to hold out against his flying gray sword talisman for half a day. Even if Feng Yue’s small blade was somewhat stronger, the Flying Dark-Iron Shield could probably withstand it for at least a short time.

It was only because of the above reasoning that Han Li was willing to take this risk.

Seeing that he temporarily didn’t need to worry, Han Li immediately grabbed the “Golden Light Brick” talisman in his hand, preparing to activate it and shoot down the opponent in one blow!

But before he was able to rotate the spiritual power in his body and begin to cast the talisman, Feng Yue suddenly yelled out, “Sl*t! Where are you trying to run?”

Then his body image flashed; he appeared in a nearby patch of dense forest, blocking someone off.

The person who was trying to sneakily run into the dense forest was none other than the yellow-robed woman.

It turned out that this woman, seeing that her odds of success were low and recognizing Feng Yue’s fearsome reputation, became fearful in her heart. She decided to use the moment while Han Li

and Feng Yue were battling to run away, fleeing without a trace.

Han Li had long noticed this woman's activity; although he was somewhat resentful in his heart, he wasn't interested in doing anything about it.

Since she seemed to be unable to help if she stayed, if she wanted to leave it was up to her!

However, she had first betrayed their agreement of cooperation, so he would not try to prevent her from attempting to flee. On the other hand, he would no longer help her; whether she survived or perished depended on herself alone!

Han Li had coldly decided to ignore this woman, but the fury of Feng Yue was still burning, and he would not be so easily deceived.

He had long ago developed a strong hate for both Han Li and the yellow-robed woman because of the words that Han Li had spoken. When he saw this woman trying to flee, he was naturally unwilling to let her go! This was why he suddenly flew to block the yellow-robed woman's path.

When Han Li's Senior Martial Sister saw this, she was so frightened that she became like a mortal, turning around and running. All of her magic skills had been forgotten.

When Feng Yue saw this, his ugly face throbbed a few times, and he slipped away, again standing in front of that woman. He raised

his hand without hesitation, causing his large hand to glow with yellow light. He then inserted this hand directly through her chest, protruding out her back; the hand became a bloody hand that dripped with blood.

The yellow-robed female's corpse fell to the ground, her eyes opened wide; however, her eyes had lost their vigor. Before she died, perhaps she regretted her rash decision to leave Han Li's side, but there was no medicine for regret that she could eat in this world!

Based on the fact that the opponent had no more magic tools or strong talismans left, Feng Yue, having just slaughtered the yellow-robed female at close range, removed his hand and purposefully licked the blood still dripping from his finger. Then, he smiled maliciously at Han Li.

When the Han Li hiding inside the shield saw this, his face turned green, and he pressed his lips tightly together. Although he didn't yell out, he had definitely been scared out of his wits, Feng Yue delightedly thought.

In reality, the reason he had been able to win against his opponents so easily in the past was mostly due to his fearsome reputation. When people who fought against him thought about the fate worse than death that they would suffer at his hands, they would already be fearful even before they fought. Naturally, their fighting abilities would suffer greatly, and losing became inevitable.

Today, Feng Yue saw that although Han Li's cultivation was not

very deep, the magic tools he had were quite strong. Thus, he intended to use this kind of scare tactic to weaken Han Li's fighting ability and gain the upper hand.

Now, looking at Han Li's expression, it seemed as if his tactics had worked. Feng Yue was secretly happy in his heart, swaying on his feet as if he were showing off. He returned to his original position in front of Han Li.

The color of Han Li's face was indeed not pleasant to look at, and the feelings in his heart were also not worth mentioning. However, it wasn't because of the opponent's bloody methods; rather, it was because he was preparing to move like lightning that he felt his head starting to hurt like crazy.

The last time Han Li had used the "Golden Light Brick" treasure talisman, he realized that although its power seemed to be much greater than the flying gray sword talisman, in real battles with other opponents, there were actually a few large drawbacks.

Its destructive power was truly frightening; if one was hit by it, lower-layered cultivators would be obliterated no matter how many magic tools or protective barriers they had on them. They wouldn't make a big difference. However, this treasure talisman's drawbacks were also incredibly apparent. It could only be used after sucking up a large amount of the user's magic power, and its lack of speed or mobility would leave people speechless.

If it was possible to bind the opponent beforehand, this treasure talisman's surprising function would be greatly increased; it would be the best tool for killing people. But if someone were to use only

the Golden Light Brick to kill their enemies, it would be an unthinkable thing to do. Unless the opponent's magic power was depleted, using a few random supportive techniques would allow someone to easily dodge this treasure's attack.

Thus, this "Golden Light Brick" treasure talisman was actually not like the flying sword treasure talisman or Feng Yue's small blade treasure talisman in the sense that it was not meant for a dogfight. Instead, it was purely effective for generating huge amounts of destructive power, similar to the official magic treasures of Core Formation experts from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress.

Because Han Li no longer had any magic tools that could bind the enemy, his original plan was to use multiple golden blades to slow down the enemy, and then use the Golden Light Brick to launch a surprise attack when the opponent was least expecting it. According to Han Li's reasoning, although success wasn't one hundred percent guaranteed, there was still approximately a fifty percent chance!

However, after seeing Feng Yue's movements, Han Li knew this plan was simply unrealistic. Based on the opponent's display of speed that was not slower than the Shifting Smoke Steps, it would be easy for him to escape from the magic tool dogfight at any time.

Han Li was extremely vexed, but he was also somewhat bewildered. Could it be that this Feng Yue was the same as him, having origins from Jiang Hu?

Chapter 189: Extermination By Lightning

Although Han Li could not understand how Feng Yue's movements were so fast, suspicions began to arise in his heart.

But now was not the time to get to investigate; he had no choice, but to put away the "Golden Light Brick" treasure talisman. He waved the "Golden Beetle Swarm Blade's" mother blade in his hand, causing all of the children blades to fly out like a swarm of bees, turning into eight streaks of golden light. They all aggressively shot towards Feng Yue, relying on the chaos the large numbers would create in order to obtain victory.

If the opponent was willing to withdraw the yellow streak to protect himself, it would obviously be better; he would be able to force a stalemate for quite some time, but Han Li was not confident in this idea. Based on the opponent having such a widespread reputation, his true strength definitely would not be limited to this. The previous attack seemed to intend to probe him.

As expected, when Feng Yue saw Han Li's golden blades flying towards him, he wasn't panicked in the slightest.

He laughed coldly a few times, and an item that he had just taken out began to emit light; it was a yellow umbrella-shaped magic tool.

Feng Yue didn't actually cause the umbrella to leave his hand; instead, when he saw the eight streaks of golden light appear in front of him, he leisurely opened the umbrella. A spherical barrier

made of yellow light appeared and immediately covered up all of Feng Yue's body. When the golden blades hit the ball of light, they exploded with strange "pi pi pa pa" sounds, and all of the golden blades easily rebounded.

This was also a high-grade protective magic tool, and judging by its strength it definitely surpassed that of Han Li's Flying Dark-Iron Shield.

Han Li's facial color changed dramatically, becoming slightly wane. Feng Yue began to laugh crazily and loudly, and his expression was one of delight.

This was not surprising; ever since he had obtained the "Yellow Parasol", he had never been harmed by any low-layer cultivators. Seeing Han Li's frightened appearance, he naturally felt extremely carefree in his heart.

Feng Yue valued this umbrella far more than the knife treasure talisman. Treasure talismans could only be used for a limited amount of time; when their energy was used up, they became useless pieces of paper. On the other hand, the "Yellow Parasol" could be used an unlimited number of times!

Han Li sighed and cut off his spell, pointing with one finger; all of the golden blades were summoned back to him and returned to their original shape upon landing in his hand.

Feng Yue didn't know what Han Li planned to do, but since he was still being protected and felt carefree, he focused all of his

attention on controlling the yellow streak,

Based on protective ability and scope, the “Flying Dark-Iron Shield” possibly was much worse than the “Yellow Parasol”; however, what Feng Yue didn’t know was that in terms of flexibility, this small shield definitely was much better than most normal defensive magic tools.

In the end, it didn’t matter how frantically Feng Yue made the yellow streak move or how wondrously it hovered; they were all completely blocked by the shield outside. It was at this time that he realized if he didn’t utterly destroy this shield, he would have no way of getting to Han Li!

His face revealed an expression of resent, and he was forced to return to his old tactic of using the yellow streak of the knife to slowly wear at the iron shield. Despite the fact that the black light being emitted from the shield had already been decreased by a significant amount, the remaining light was enough to resist for a short period of time.

At this time, Han Li, seeing that there was no way for him to secure victory, clenched his teeth and made a heart-wrenching decision.

He returned the golden blades to his storage pouch and switched it out for a small, azure-black gourd. He raised the gourd high into the air, and seven or eight black spheres flew out from it; these spheres flew towards Feng Yue, light as a feather.

Feng Yue was naturally aware of Han Li's movements, and thus he stared blankly for a moment. This was because the gourd magic tool was simply too common; lower-layer cultivators all knew about these cheap magic tools, and almost all of them had tried using such items before.

It didn't matter whether the tool that contained the spheres was a gourd or a bottle or a pot; although the spheres that came shooting out of it were very enticingly called "Primeval Beads", their strength as compared to top-quality magic tools was simply too small.

But it was also because of this that Feng Yue began to suspect something in his heart.

He didn't wait for the spheres to come near him; instead, he reached out and placed an "Ice Spear Technique" talisman into his hand. Then, he raised it, and the talisman immediately became a crystal-clear, brilliantly white ice spear, which he resolutely threw to meet the spheres.

With a crisp "peng", the ice spear flew knocked away three or four of these spheres before shattering. White fragments of ice dispersed in midair, as if they were flowers scattered by heavenly maidens. These fragments of ice became a small rain of hail, beautiful in an unexpected way.

Seeing these circumstances unfold, Feng Yue finally began to relax, and he once again focused his attention onto Han Li himself. This was because at this time, an azure banner had suddenly appeared; on this banner was the image of an azure dragon baring

its fangs and brandishing its claws. It appeared incredibly realistic, as if it were about to jump out.

Feng Yue's experience was very abundant, and with one glance he knew this definitely was a top-notch, high-grade magic tool; he could not afford to underestimate its strength!

Meanwhile, Han Li was controlling this flag, allowing its surface to begin to accumulate azure-colored spiritual light. This light was very dazzling, and its strength was truly not small.

Although Feng Yue was completely confident in his Yellow Parasol, his prudent and cunning personality caused him to unblinkingly stare at this azure flag, afraid that this magic tool would have some kind of odd power and could break through his defenses.

As for those Primeval Beads, he had long realized that those were red herrings meant to disturb his line of sight, and so he ignored them. Based on the pitiful destructive force of the Primeval Beads, even if they were to hover around the Yellow Parasol for an entire day it would be impossible for them to disturb his defenses even slightly.

However, Feng Yue became increasingly distressed and bewildered after seeing Han Li take out one high-grade magic tool after another.

He guessed that Han Li and that woman with many treasures were the same and that he was the disciple of some expert. His

desire to kill Han Li became even more urgent.

He feared that if the opponent was able to survive, it would cause him no end of trouble. Even more so, the opponent had witnessed the entire process of him killing people and stealing their belongings. If the elder of the woman with many treasures came looking for him, he would have a lot of trouble on his hands.

Right as Feng Yue was attracted by the Azure Flood Dragon Banner and his killing intent was rising, those Primeval Beads flew in front of him and ran into the barrier created by the Yellow Parasol. After making some silvery noises from attacking the barrier, the foremost few beads were easily repelled out.

When Feng Yue heard that sound, he instinctively lowered his head to take a look.

“Relying on those Primeval Beads to attack me is too arrogant! These aren’t even worth mentioning; even...”

“Yi! Why is this one so small; it’s even colored blue.....”

Feng Yue had just sneered when he discovered a Primeval Bead that had revealed a blue bead hiding inside of it after it had been reflected. It was only as large as a pill, much more modest in size than regular Primeval Beads.

Feng Yue startled a little; before he was able to come up with an idea, the blue bead had already hit the ball-shaped barrier.

“White light! A magnificent, blinding white light!”

This was the last color that Feng Yue ever saw in this world. His body slowly turned, and then he never knew anything again.

In the eyes of Han Li, when the blue bead came into contact with the yellow light, it immediately exploded out with silver light in a sphere a few Zhang wide. It noiselessly enveloped the larger half of Feng Yue’s body. After this, the white light disappeared without a trace, revealing Feng Yue’s stupefied expression, as if he were ready to fight another day.

Han Li’s heart sank, but before he could move, a light gust of wind blew. Feng Yue’s body suddenly collapsed like grains of sand and turned into ash that blew away with the wind.

All that remained were the halves of two small legs and the pair of shoes on his feet. They stood all alone on the ground, creating an unspeakably strange scene.

When Han Li saw this, he was not afraid. In fact, he immediately sat on the ground and breathed in deeply, allowing his heart, which had been stuck in his throat, to calm down.

It was only after using his greatest lethal tactic, “Heaven’s Lightning Child”, paired with a whole string of movements meant to cover it up, that he was able to completely wipe out Feng Yue from the face of the earth.

But Han Li's expression was not actually one of joy; rather, it displayed both self-deprecation and bitter laughter.

This was not too surprising, given that the Trial by Blood and Fire had only entered the second day; he had already used all of his magic treasures, as well as his ultimate trump card he was saving as a last resort. How could he possibly be happy?

When he thought about the remaining three days, as well as the unknown number of violent people he would meet like Feng Yue, his heart sank again even as he had just begun to relax.

However, if he hadn't used the Heaven's Lightning Child, it would have definitely been difficult for him to escape; the Flying Dark-Iron Shield had reached its breaking point. In addition, considering the opponent's high-grade magic tools as well as the woman with many treasures, he definitely had not suffered a loss; in fact, it would be more accurate to say that he had struck it rich!

Han Li began to think better of his situation, and his countenance was revived; he hurriedly looked to the opposite side. But as soon as his eyes fell upon the site, Han Li's mouth fell wide open, rendering him speechless for a significant amount of time!

Chapter 190: Black Boots

Because Feng Yue had originally been standing, apart from that pair of boots, there was nothing else on the floor. The storage pouches Han Li had in mind disappeared without a trace.

Han Li stood straight like a carp jumping on water, and then, as if his buttocks were on fire, he hurriedly charged over. After searching for a great long while in the area where Feng Yue disappeared, he couldn't find the slightest trace of the storage pouch.

“Could it be that the power of the Heaven's Thunder Child was so powerful? It actually turned the storage pouch into ashes along with the person?” After Han Li searched his surroundings with his hands several times, he eventually came to an extremely depressing answer.

Unresigned, Han Li expanded the search area by several times, but the result was the same. However, he was actually able to acquire the rich girl's small mirror and crystal ball. Furthermore, because the owner had already died, he was able to recover the small blade treasure talisman.

When Han Li saw these three items, he thought that the loss of his Heaven's Lightning Child, the high-quality magic tools: the silver hook, and the azure rope, as well as the storage pouches that were destroyed by the Heaven's Lightning Child, he looked up to the sky speechlessly.

However, regardless of what was said after this great battle, he was nonetheless the winner against the much stronger Feng Yue, who had turned to dust.

Han Li, not knowing whether to consider it a profit or a loss, could only mock himself.

When he thought of Feng Yue, Han Li unconsciously looked at what was left at him: a pair of halved legs. He could not help but lightly shake his head. He then lifted his hand, releasing two fist-sized fireballs straight toward them. Since this person was already dead, he naturally must thoroughly dispose of the legs to prevent others from discovering this. Who knew what others troubles could arise?

Pengpeng. The flames immediately covered them. In the blink of an eye, aside from those jet-black boots, everything else had turned to ash.

Satisfied, Han Li nodded his head and turned around, thinking to depart.

“Boots? How strange!”

“How could normal boots come out unscathed from my fireballs?”

Just as Han Li took a small step to leave, he immediately saw his mistake and hurried to turn around. He looked toward those

seemingly ordinary boots with an odd expression.

With a careful look, Han Li was unable to discover anything irregular. Not only were these boots not destroyed by the fireballs, but they also didn't have a single trace of being burned. Furthermore, they faintly released slight spiritual ripples.

“Magic tool?”

Han Li asked with great bewilderment.

He hesitated for a moment and walked several steps over, lowering his head and picking up the pair of black boots.

“Light and soft, but they are still very tough! They shouldn't be cloth or silk boots. They seem to have been made from the hide of an animal!” Han Li concluded after stroking the boots for a while.

Because he was close to them, Han Li was able to feel the boots' faint Spiritual Qi.

They were certainly magic tool! In addition, they were magic tools that were likely to have been constructed from demonic beast leather.

Seeing these leather boots, Han Li faintly thought of something. He somewhat impatiently took off his cloth shoes and exchanged them for these leather boot magic tools.

They were very comfortable and soft, as if there was nothing there! This was what Han Li first thought when he wore those boots.

He carefully observed the boots after wearing them for a while. So far, nothing extraordinary had occurred.

Wrinkling his brow, Han Li took a small step.

Huchi. Han Li's body suddenly flashed, and his entire body appeared over a Zhang away, as light as a feather.

'Imperial Flight Technique! No, it's much quicker than the Imperial Flight Technique!' Han Li thought, pleasantly surprised.

At this moment, Han Li finally knew the secret behind Feng Yue's incomparably fast and nimble movements. It was probably because of these boots that he was able to move so strangely and as quick as lightning.

Wearing these boots, Han Li started slowly walking on the ground, gradually familiarizing himself with the boots' performance. He gradually grew faster and faster, finally making use of Shifting Smoke Steps to speed up.

Before, Han Li's fastest movements had been able to make his body blur, even causing afterimages to remain. After he put on these boots, Han Li became even faster, causing several identical

phantoms to appear simultaneously, all using the same movements and all with the same smile. However, when all of the phantoms simultaneously and gradually converged, Han Li stood there at the center.

Motionless, Han Li stood blankly at his original location as if he were pondering about something, but he then howled with laughter and continued to laugh until tears were flowing out.

After he laughed for a long while, Han Li bent his waist and flashed with an azure light. His entirety turned into an azure wind and actually disappeared into air without a trace.

At this moment, the entire place was extremely quiet. Apart from the occasional rustling of the wind, there were no other sounds.

A burst of rumbling sounds suddenly sounded out. The nearby trees suddenly started to break apart in a strange manner from the center. The cuts were clean and smooth, making the trees resemble the flat of a mirror; however, it was clear that there wasn't a single person in sight.

The speed at the trees breaking grew quicker and quicker. A short moment later, all that remained of the trees within several tens of Zhang were tree stumps.

At this moment, Han Li, enveloped in a faint azure light, appeared with a brow filled with sweat. However, he was faintly smiling and was unable to conceal the joy on his face.

Shifting Smoke Steps, leather boot magic tools, along with the Imperial Flight Technique, actually caused Han Li to become so fast that he was able to temporarily break away from the sight of an ordinary person's naked eye, as if he had become invisible, disappearing without a trace.

According to Han Li's estimates, even an outstanding cultivator with the aid of the Heaven's Eye Technique would only be able to see a faint glimpse of him by exerting all their strength. If they didn't use a defensive magic technique, Han Li would be a great threat.

Currently, so long as Han Li concentrated and a person was within an area several Zhang away, even if it was a distance of several tens of Zhang, it would take Han Li at most a single breath to reach them.

Naturally, this speed exceeded the limits of the human body; Han Li was only able to maintain the speed for a short amount of time. If he maintained it for too long, his entire body would break down. After all, such high speed movements were extremely stressful on Han Li's body.

However, it was already fast enough for him to kill the opponent several times. Especially if it were a situation where he used the thread magic tool, his power would increase many times over.

Han Li lowered his head. With a sigh, he caressed the leather boots on his feet for a long while.

He felt that this item was extremely suited for him. Even if someone wanted to use some treasure talisman to exchange for them, he wouldn't even consider it!

With his confidence increased several times over, Han Li excitedly looked around in every direction.

When he saw the corpse of the yellow-clothed woman, he lightly sighed and used a fireball to blast open a hole. He buried the woman's body extremely crudely. That was to the limit of what Han Li could do.

After he finished this, Han Li's figure flashed and disappeared into the forest. He currently wanted to hurry towards the central area.

However, Han Li did not know that after the massacre of the first day that the disciples spent in the forbidden area, only seventy disciples from the various sects remained. Less than half of those who had entered the forbidden area remained. The majority of these were the elite disciples of each sect, and they had all promptly arrived near the central area, preparing and waiting idly for the second day's great purge.

Those they believed to be weak had all been mercilessly eliminated one by one.

Of course, the rich girl and the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciple Feng Yue who had been killed by Han Li were among those who had participated in the slaughter. However, they were now

dead, naturally disappeared without a trace!

Chapter 191: Disloyalty And Solitude

To the west side of the central area, precious medicines herbs grew in the ravines. Three cultivators were battling fiercely with a three-eyed Flame Wolf; a middle-aged man wearing the robes of the Giant Sword Sect controlled a huge azure sword, which blocked most of the Flame Wolf's attacks. At the same time, a yellow-robed old man and a young man wearing a gray Daoist robe provided supporting attacks from the sides.

In a short time, the disciple from the Giant Sword Sect went all out and beheaded the wolf's body in one fluid swing, getting hit by a huge fireball in the process. Then, he sheathed his giant sword and began to laugh while looking into the sky.

“Brother Meng's magic power really is very profound, capable of killing this three-eyed Flame Wolf in one slash! You are worthy of being called one of the Giant Sword Sect's brilliant disciples.....” the yellow-robed old man, seeing the circumstances, immediately ran over diligently and began to unceasingly fawn over him; his face bore no traces of flushing.

If Han Li was there, he would have recognized this old man as the one who had initially invited him to form an alliance with the weaker members. His name was Xiang Zhili. However, the young disciple from the same sect as him was no longer there; it seemed that when they were being transported, he had strayed off.

“Hehe, if it wasn't for Brother Xiang and Daoist Priest Li's assistance from the sides, success would not have been so easy!” The middle-aged man who wore a black robe and held his sword

was actually very modest.

“Brother Meng, there’s no need to be courteous! You were able to get rid of this kind of demonic beast, so you deserve all the credit. There’s no room for debate!” The other young Daoist Priest, although young in age, spoke neither overbearing nor in a servile way. He was clearly an experienced individual.

Hearing what was spoken, a trace of a smile appeared on the black-clothed, middle-aged man’s face, but he immediately spoke a few more modest sentences.

“Speaking of which, the other people who are still fighting really are silly! If they knew that the three of us could actually work together to defeat these demonic beasts and collect medicinal ingredients despite being from different sects, it’s possible that they would be so shocked their jaws would fall off!” The black-clothed man spoke, suddenly changing the subject.

“Of course! This all came about because of Brother Xiang! If it wasn’t for Brother Xiang making everything thoroughly clear, perhaps Brother Meng and I would probably still be fighting to the death!” The Daoist Priest nodded his head as he spoke.

“You praise me too highly! You are both extremely smart people; all I did was speak the truth! Nobody needs to waste their lives trying to retrieve items that could never end up in the hands of people like us. How great is it that everyone ignores the precious medicinal ingredients outside of the central area because they’re too busy killing each other! In addition, if we all work together, dealing with these demonic beasts is a piece of cake!” Xiang Zhili

giggled happily, glibly and repeatedly declining politely.

Hearing this, the other two people began another frenzied round of flattery.

“Okay, we should quickly move and pick the ‘Fire Dragon Grass’! Everybody gets an equally large portion!” It was the black-clothed man who first ran out of patience and spoke. His voice revealed a hint of urgency, and after saying this he began to walk towards a few clumps of red grass behind the body of the Flame Wolf.

Hearing this, Xiang Zhili and the Daoist Priest smiled at each other with hidden meanings in their eyes; then, they walked towards him, their mouths full of words of agreement.

The two of them hadn’t realized, however, that the black-clothed man with his back facing towards them suddenly revealed a trace of a cloudy and strict expression. However, it quickly disappeared.

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South of the central area, in a small area covered with yellow sand, a male and a female disciple from the Masked Moon Sect were using ice awls to continuously puncture the desert ground as if they were looking for something.

However, after half a day, they still had not obtained anything.

“This sl*t, where exactly did she hide! After finding her, I will

definitely claw out her eyes!” The female disciple appeared to be incredibly enchanting, as beautiful as a flower, but as soon as she opened her mouth, she became sinister and vicious to the extreme. If men heard her speaking in this way, they would shiver.

“Junior Martial Sister, let’s just let it go! The time that the sect arranged is about to pass; if we don’t leave now, we’ll be late!” The male disciple weakly said. It seemed as if he was very scared of this Junior Martial Sister.

“Humph! It’s the fault of a worthless piece of trash like you. You couldn’t even keep track of a tenth layer cultivator girl. She actually slipped away from right underneath our noses! If this spreads, people will make laughingstocks out of me and my sister, the Masked Moon Sect’s Twin Beauties!

But words were just words in the end. The female disciple glanced at the brightness of the sky, and did not dare to continue to search. She didn’t want to interfere with the major plans of her sect; even if her status was special and she had a strong backer, they were all relatively unimportant.

On the other hand, she was also unwilling to leave this place with her tail between her legs; after hesitating many times, she gritted her teeth and pulled out a blue talisman.

Looking at this talisman, she laughed evilly, and abruptly tossed the talisman behind her. Then, she quickly ran out from that area until she was a few tens of Zhang far away before stopping and turning around to watch from there.

Seeing this, the male disciple complained incessantly under his breath, but he quickly followed after her, not daring to slight her.

At this time, the talisman became a huge black cloud, roughly the size of ten Zhang; the sky above the area was completely covered up by the cloud, and the nearby temperature abruptly dropped, becoming incomparably cold.

In no time, countless massive ice awls began to fall from the black cloud at an increasing speed, and in a very short amount of time the entire area was densely packed with ice awls stuck into the ground. It was as densely packed, as dense as the needles on a cactus.

In the time it took to boil a pot of tea, the black cloud slowly dissipated. At this time, the entire desert sparkled like crystal.

The female disciple opened her eyes wide, sweeping across the entire desert, which was virtually impossible to stand on. However, she didn't see even a trace of anything peculiar.

Her face viciously fell, and she unhappily shouted at the male disciple. She resentfully took the lead and left the area. Her so-called cultivation partner naturally followed closely behind her.

The Masked Moon Sect woman who had just left didn't notice that in a corner of the ice-awl covered desert, a trace amount of red liquid had seeped out. Unfortunately, its color was too light, and so it escaped the notice of that female disciple.

After half of a quarter of an hour, when the dark red had begun to spread, a spherical small bubble suddenly emerged from the yellow sand, becoming increasingly large and increasingly noticeable.

In the end, the sand bubble exploded in a raging torrent, and a green-robed female tumbled out of it, a long, slender awl stuck into her shoulder. Fresh blood flowed from the wound, covering half of her body already. Her hand was tightly gripping a yellow handkerchief; radiance flickered on its surface, as if it were not a common item.

The woman slowly crawled to her feet. When she looked at the wound on her shoulder, her sleek eyebrows tightly knitted.

She raised her other hand and lightly grabbed the latter half of the ice awl; then, gritting her teeth, she pulled out the ice awl. The woman delicately groaned in pain, and tears leaked out of her graceful eyes. Fresh blood poured out from the site of the wound.

However, she couldn't afford to wipe away the tears on her face; she didn't dare delay. After a brief flurry of movement, she retrieved a flowery porcelain bottle from her storage pouch. She dumped out some yellow medicinal powder onto her wound, and the blood immediately stopped gushing from her wound.

After finishing, the green-robed woman sat down on the desert sand and hugged her knees, unmoving. After a brief moment of time, she suddenly buried her head in her hands and began to cry.

However, because she was scared of drawing the attention of other people, this woman kept her crying volume to a minimum.

After the time it took to eat a meal had passed, this female disciple from Spirit Beast Mountain finally stopped weeping. She raised her head. Gazing at the uninhabited desert, she couldn't help but shiver!

She bit her lip, and then struggled to stand up. After vacillating for a long time, she finally determined her direction and staggered towards the central area. The woman's pretty and pleasant face still had some tear stains on it, but at the same time, she wore a stubborn and resolute expression that didn't seem to match her appearance.

This woman was the one who had sold Han Li the "Golden Sincerity Brush". However, now that she had been wounded and was walking silently on the sandy ground alone, she was even more beautifully pitiful, causing people to want to take care of her.

After a brief moment of time, she continued to onward with her wounded body as she disappeared into the yellow sands.

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Chapter 192: Flying Snakes

After walking on the route for a little less than half a day, Han Li finally reached the outer reaches of the central area.

Han Li felt that something was unusual; the entire way here, absolutely nothing had occurred, and he hadn't run into anybody else attacking him from afar!

Of course, he couldn't know that the people who had come in the same direction earlier had all been killed off by those so-called "elites". The people behind him, on the other hand, were disposed of, having run into Feng Yue and the woman with many treasures.

Like that, although there were some fish that escaped the net, they all knew that to steal treasures from others was impossible at this point. Thus, they covered up their tracks and found a place to hide, sticking their head into the ground like an ostrich. This was the open secret of how the weaker cultivators would preserve their own lives in the Trial by Blood and Fire!

If Han Li wanted to obtain the three main ingredients to refine his Foundation Establishment Pill, he obviously could not follow in their footsteps. That was why he currently stood on a stone wall a few Zhang high, looking intently at the wall in front of him with a strange expression on his face.

On the side of the stone wall, not too far away, stood an interesting and appealing large bronze door. The door had many markings on it that Han Li could not understand; they were

written in an ancient language that almost looked like a decorative design.

Since this copper door was wide open today, people must have already gone through it.

According to the information that Han Li knew, there should have been four kinds of these copper doors, each one in each of the cardinal directions. They were the only entrances into the central area. The areas not including the doors were surrounded by a stone wall that didn't seem to be too high.

If one didn't want to enter through the bronze doors, instead wanting to seize every possibly opportunity and jump over the stone wall to get into the central area, these people would definitely be incredibly unlucky. They would be sliced into shreds by the wall's wind restriction spell.

Of course, Han Li knew this and naturally wouldn't idiotically choose to climb over the wall. The only reason he was closely watching the wall's movements was entirely because this section of the wall was truly somewhat different from the others. Its surface contained an extra "thing" that other normal walls did not have.

On top of this wall stood three people wearing different clothing. They had been impaled by a thick ice awl, their limbs nailed together to form the Chinese character "large (大)", which hung on top of the wall in a row. Seeing that there was no odor at all, they must've already been dead for a long time.

The fresh blood that poured out of the four wounds coagulated into a purplish-black solid; this solid was all over the place, both on top of the wall and nearby. According to Han Li's speculations, at the time that these people had been nailed on top of the wall, the majority of them had not yet died. However, they had later tragically died on the wall due to blood loss.

There were no clues or trails left next to the three corpses, but if one thought about it carefully, anyone could realize that these people were killed to make an example of. The goal was to scare away people arriving later from entering through this door!

Han Li very carefully inspected the painful expressions of the three corpses, then licked his somewhat dry lips and walked expressionlessly towards the copper door. It was as if the miserable fates of those three people had not affected him that much.

In reality, however, Han Li knew his own feelings quite well; the previous scene had really left him apprehensive! It was apparent from the way those three people died that their killer most likely was someone whose heart was twisted; if he were to fall into that person's hands, he would be a bit more fortunate if he hurried to kill himself.

However, Han Li had already come here; naturally, he wouldn't flee from here simply because of a little fear. Today, in front of him were the true extreme dangers. He would have to summon up his own courage and barge in this time!

Like this, Han Li walked through the door, carrying a stomach full of uneasiness. However, he maintained his composure on the surface, as leisurely if he were strolling around in his home's backyard.

He had just entered when he was greeted by the scene of a paradise of fragrant flowers and birdsong. All kinds of odd flowers and grasses, as well as many strange trees with unknown names, were strikingly everywhere. Silver chrysanthemums as wide as bowls, blood-red strange trees, purple grass releasing a strange smell, yellow bamboo as thick as a person, etc. – these were all rare items that were very difficult to even see in the outside world. In the midst of these precious plants actually was a serpentine path made of crushed rocks; this path extended from where Han Li was standing to a faraway place, obscured by all of the vegetation. From a brief glance, it seemed as if there was no end to this path.

Seeing this surprising scene, Han Li briefly stared blankly, but he immediately subconsciously took a deep breath. What dense Spiritual Qi! The dense, heavy, and mixed smell of plants contained a Spiritual Qi that just soaked into a person's lungs, causing Han Li's spirits to rise.

This kind of paradise, no wonder it could bring forth all the spiritual medicines that exist! Han Li was deeply moved.

“Boy, have you gawked enough?”

“Who is it?”

Sounding like a broken gong, a noise, suddenly came over, causing Han Li's heart to shiver with fear. He couldn't help but cry out.

“Hehe! Since you've seen it already, you can die in peace!” This person completely ignored Han Li's inquiry, instead talking out to himself out loud.

At the same time, two green shadows slyly streaked out from a flower patch on the side, silently charging towards Han Li's back.

Although his back was facing these green shadows, they were not concealed from Han Li's spiritual awareness, who was already on guard. His expression grew grim. His upper body had not moved at all, but his body had already automatically shifted laterally a few feet, causing these two green streaks to pass by him both in front and behind him.

In the middle of the chaos, Han Li glanced at the green shadows. They were straight, thin, and long, like chopsticks, and their entire bodies were green and had some faint black characters on them. Their appearances was truly somewhat strange.

However, in the chaos, Han Li had no time to look closely at them. Even though he had easily neutralized the opponent's attack, his expression was still solemn, and he didn't dare to be careless. The miserable appearance of the three people outside the door was still vivid in his mind; he did not want to end up with a fate similar to theirs.

Thus, the cloudy-faced Han Li's eyes began sweeping in all directions, flickering without stopping, in order to find the hiding enemies. However, at this time a strange whistle suddenly came out of that person's mouth; hearing it would make one's heart extremely uncomfortable!

When Han Li heard it, he briefly froze; just as he was trying to figure out what the opponent's intentions were, his facial color changed drastically, and he flew backwards at an almost inconceivable rate. This time, Han Li flew at least a few Zhang away before stopping.

What caused Han Li to move in such a manner had actually been those green streaks that had only narrowly missed him! Because they weren't very far in front of Han Li, they suddenly began to twist around, at the same time unfolding a pair of pale green, translucent wings.

They were actually two flying snakes with wings; when they had attacked Han Li, their bodies were always stretched tightly, causing Han Li to mistakenly believe that they were inanimate objects. With a gentle flap of their wings, their bodies rapidly turned around 180 degrees as quickly as lightning; in fact, they were not slower than Han Li, who had used the Shifting Smoke Steps. How could this not make Han Li incredibly cautious!

These two flying snakes reared their heads, and four small green eyes released an ice-cold chilliness. They were baring their fangs at Han Li, about to take another attacking stance against him.

“Boy, you run pretty quickly! But even if you were quicker, could

you be quicker than these two Jungle Mountain Flying Snakes? It would be better if you obediently allowed my lovely snakes to bite you once, and you would feel no more pain!” The person with the rough throat was somewhat astonished by Han Li’s movement speed, but he clearly had more faith in his flying snakes, which was why he mockingly said what was spoken above.

“Rubbish!”

Han Li cursed in his heart, but he didn’t actually speak these that word out loud! It wasn’t because of fear of the opponent that he didn’t speak; but rather, those two strange snakes had already become two streaks of green, charging forwards in a blur.

Halfway there, they suddenly split into two and wordlessly agreed to slash out in arcs, flanking from both his left and his right.

Seeing this, Han Li naturally could not afford to talk back apart from quietly cursing in his heart for a few moments. His body nevertheless could not be much slower than the green streaks as he shot backwards; in the blink of an eye, he and the green streaks had flown in many circles in this small area, as if he was unwilling to stop his feet for even a moment.

At this point in time, he completely relied on the spiritual boots on his feet to run, but he didn’t use the Shifting Smoke Steps or the Imperial Flight Technique.

It wasn’t that Han Li was being negligent and purposefully

looking down on his opponent; rather, after encountering two fierce battles in a row, and adding on the fact that he had just reached his limit when practicing with these boots, his energy had not completely recovered. Thus, if he had not reached a life or death crisis, Han Li was unwilling to use the energy-squandering Shifting Smoke Steps. As for the Imperial Flight Technique, it was the same principle; having already obtained good fortune in getting the spiritual boots, adding on the speed boost of the Imperial Flight Technique would cause the burden on Han Li's body to be too great and would not aid the recovery of his energy.

Of course, Han Li would also not allow the two flying snakes to chase after him to no end.

Although Han Li did not dare to carelessly wear a barrier and cause himself slow him down, to test whether the barrier or the strange snakes were stronger, he still had many methods to get rid of the two small snakes! It was only that most of his attention had been focused on the hidden person controlling the snakes, who in the end had never come out, thus allowing the two flying snakes to attack him. Seeing that this person had seemingly decided to completely rely on these two flying snakes to kill him, Han Li naturally would not continue to be polite.

Han Li's decision had been made. He flipped his hand, and a Flame Serpent Talisman appeared in it. Two of his fingers pinched this talisman together, and he was about to excitedly throw it out and start a wild game barbecue!

“Cloud Step Boots?

“Stay your hand, I have something to say!”

The person with the rough throat recognized the spiritual boots on Han Li's feet, and he immediately yelled out to ask for a pause in the battle, sounding full of incredulity. He stopped the two green streaks with an unknown method of yelling! The two snakes paused in midair and flew backwards along the original route, slipping into the vegetation and disappearing without a trace.

Upon hearing this, Han Li knitted his eyebrows; after slightly hesitating, he decided not to throw out the talisman in his hand, but he kept his hand cautiously resting on top of his storage pouch.

Chapter 193: Division Between Enemy And Friends

“Old Feng’s treasured boots? How did you acquire them? What is your relationship? As far as I know, that guy truly treasures his Cloud Step Boots. He absolutely wouldn’t lend them to others!”

Following these few words, a gaudily dressed person came out from an unknown place and dropped down from a huge flowered tree more than sixty meters away from Han Li. He had a medium stature, eyes of different size, and a black pocked face. He appeared to be about forty years old and had seven to eight different pockets of various sizes.

However, his unbearably ugly face was shocking! His two eyes were rigidly staring at Han Li’s spiritual boots. It seemed he did not dare believe that Han Li was wearing the “Cloud Step Boots”.

“Who is your esteemed self? Why have you attacked me?” Han Li did not reply to his question and instead bluntly asked this question. He truly didn’t wish to be lead by the nose and be suppressed by the other’s presence.

When the ugly man heard this, he was surprised but immediately grew angry, his ugly face turning vicious. He raised his hand, wanting to immediately teach this brat before him a lesson in appreciating the kindness of others. However, he soon thought of something and immediately restrained his wrath with great effort, lowering his hand. He still very fiercely said, “Boy, don’t believe that just because you wear Old Feng’s spiritual boots, I won’t dare to teach you a lesson! When that old fellow Feng Yue gave you

those spiritual boots, did he not mention the name of Spirit Beast Mountain's Zhong Wu? Regardless, I am quite baffled. You are obviously someone from Yellow Maple Valley. How could he give those boots to you? Could it be that you are Old Feng's illegitimate child? No, you don't look quite like him!"

As the ugly man said this, he was sizing up Han Li with a peculiar gaze.

This time, it was Han Li's turn to be angry. He snorted with an unsightly expression and coldly said, "Will your esteemed self refrain from wantonly making casual contact with others? That guy Feng Yue has already long been dead. These boots were peeled off his corpse!"

"Dead? That madman Feng Yue?"

The ugly man's originally overbearing closeness, after hearing Han Li's words, jumped three feet into the air and became unceasing bewilderment! Soon after, he couldn't help but fall back several steps, once again measuring up Han Li.

"You killed him?" The fiendish man let out a deep breath as his eyes spun, asking with a harsh voice. He ceased becoming cruel and vicious.

"That's right. Do you want to avenge him?" Han Li moved his hands behind his back. Motionless, he silently looked at his opponent.

From within the storage pouch, he secretly took out the thread and quietly wound it around his ring finger.

The reason why Han Li was so calm facing this person and admitted that he had killed Feng Yue was actually mostly to give him established power. He hoped this person would back out without a fight and no longer bother him. He did not wish to immediately engage in a battle where neither would win and waste his much important time for medicine gathering.

Although he heard from this person's tone that it was as if he had friendly relations with Feng Yue, Han Li believed that the possibility of him truly taking revenge on behalf of Feng Yue wasn't too large! After all, they were cultivators. The majority of them were those with few and fickle desires. Even more, this person was a villainous man.

Naturally, if the opponent insisted on taking revenge on behalf of Feng Yue, Han Li could only strike first to take the advantage. He would consume much of his physical strength to fully use his movement techniques and catch the opponent off guard, using the thread wound around his finger to quietly wrap around his neck and stealthily finish him off.

However, Han Li fully understood that the odds of success for this sort of surprise attack was not too high! The odds of success were only thirty to forty percent.

Because the distance between him and this ugly man was too far, although Han Li could rush through the sixty meter gap with his movement technique, there was no guarantee of a one-strike kill!

In addition, if the opponent felt like using a defensive magic technique, his thread would become useless.

“Revenge? What kind of joke is that? Do I look like someone that bored?” As expected, it was as Han Li had thought. After the ugly man heard Han Li’s words, he chuckled and said those words with disdain.

“Previously I truly had a friendship with that man; However, it wasn’t some deep friendship. Since this person is already dead, There is naturally no longer a friendship!” The ugly man shamelessly said. Although, his words clearly revealed his position, he wasn’t embarrassed in the slightest.

Han Li remained silent. Although he did not relax his guard, he slightly relaxed his heart. It seemed he would need to fight a heavy battle immediately after entering the central area.

“But young brother, you are truly formidable and fierce! You were actually able to deal with that guy Feng Yue, especially with his top-grade magic tools, zeze! Some of those magic tools are truly hard to come by!”

The ugly man stroked his nose and became far more affectionate toward Han Li, changing the way he addressed him! However, after he asked this, it seemed as if he indistinctly fell back several steps, greatly increasing the distance between them.

Having seen this scene, Han Li couldn’t help but bitterly smile to himself!

According to Han Li's estimations, if they were to immediately have a falling out and fight, the odds of success just declined, making success unlikely. If this "expert" was as cunning and experienced as Han Li expected, he wouldn't be easy to deal with!

Furthermore, he guessed that the opponent most likely believed that he obtained all of Feng Yue's magic treasures. As a result, he faintly showed off the appearance of being afraid of retaliation.

After he became aware of this, Han Li smiled but did not speak. Since he didn't say whether he obtained the magic tools, he didn't need to say it, causing this evil man further annoyance and a greater fear of retaliation.

"That masterpiece on the wall in front of the gate, is that your esteemed self's doing?" Han Li faintly asked, thinking of the scene in front of the gate.

"Nonsense! That was the work of that demon from the Saber Transformation Dock, Han Tianya. I definitely wouldn't have done such a pointless thing! It was a great pity of such blood and flesh that was wasted. It would have been better if I fed it to my little ones; I heard the flesh of cultivators are a great supplement for them."

As Han Li listened, he couldn't help but faintly smile. However, when the ugly man said those words, he took out a large pouch from behind his back and threw out a bloody chunk of flesh, causing Han Li's smile to become forced. There were even faint

signs of his expression breaking.

The evil man peeked at Han Li's current expression and couldn't help but secretly reveal his intentions.

In the end, this Yellow Maple Valley disciple was far too young and far too soft!

With just a few of his words, he caused his mind to become restless. If a true battle broke out, this definitely would've been a significant mistake.

However, for this person to be able to kill that Feng Yue, he could truly be cause for surprise! But how could he see or think that such an extremely common appearance could truly be such a ferocious character?

It could be said that with this guy's young age and meager magic power, even if he had several good magic tools, he wouldn't be able to beat Feng Yue's Yellow Parasol and his great quantity of top quality magic tools equivalent to the Cloud Step Boots! Still, that guy Feng Yue nonetheless fell underneath this boy's hand. This matter was truly a bit strange, but he did wear the Cloud Step Boots; this was undeniable.

Could it be he really didn't kill him but was able to acquire them from some other fortunate occurrence?

Zhong Wu pondered about this, but he was still confused. He was

unable to accurately judge Han Li's true strength. This caused him to take the initiative to test this with his own hands. If he tried to kill him but couldn't...naturally such a clever man as himself wouldn't take such a dangerous action!

After the ugly man remained puzzled and gave much deliberation, he took out his cloth pouch and blinked his uneven eyes several times. With a face full of smiles, he said to Han Li, "Oh wait, I still haven't asked .What is Young Brother's surname. Do you think you could tell me?"

"Yellow Maple Valley's Han Li."

This wasn't something worth concealing. Han Li calmly replied with an improved complexion.

"So it turned out to be Brother Han! I previously hadn't heard of Young Brother's great name. Surely, your distinguished self is one of Yellow Maple Valley's new and rising stars? How much does Brother Han understand about the central area?" Zhong Wu appeared very cordial as if he were speaking to a friend he hadn't seen for many years.

"I don't know much, but Brother Zhong is many years my senior. He surely must know much more than Han Li!" Han Li did not know what the other party was planning, but he grew greatly vigilant.

"Hehe! Brother Han, if you were to trust this one named Zhong, wouldn't it be better for us to exchange our information on the

central area? How about it? This is something that would benefit the both of us.” After Zhong Wu hesitated for a moment, he eventually spoke his true intentions with a soft voice.

After Han Li heard this, he was startled and inwardly contemplated this. Although it was strictly stated in the rules that exchanging his sect’s information without the approval of sect elders was not allowed, in reality, it was an act that disciples did much of! Thus, after a short moment, he wore a smile and said, “Sure. After we exchange resources, we will each greatly benefit.”

“Haha! That’s great. I knew it, Brother Han isn’t some overly careful person. Come! We’ll put our information into jade slips and then exchange them with each other. Zhong Wu’s face full of pockmarks of all sizes was glowing with excitement as he continuously rubbed his hands. It seemed he was greatly expectant of Han Li’s information.

When Han Li saw this, he greatly sneered several times; however, his external appearance was naturally in complete agreement.

To create a copy of information was a very effortless task! After the time it took to make a cup of tea, they finished making their copies and threw the jade slips to each other.

When they each had the jade slips in hand, they both roughly examined the contents. After they confirmed it seemed to be information of the central area, they both looked at each other with a smile containing an ulterior motive.

Within this small amount of time, it was naturally impossible to forge false information! However when the copies were made, some crucial information would be overlooked; this was naturally mutually understood!

After this event, Zhong Wu and Han Li seemed to all of a sudden become much closer! Zhong Wu actually told Han Li a few remarkable stories from the world of cultivators! Seeing these two laugh and talk so closely, it was truly hard to believe that not long ago they had been nearly irreconcilable adversaries. It seemed these two were experts in knowing when to retreat!

Although Han Li wore a beautiful smile, he appeared as if he was interested in his chat. In his heart, however, he was truly cursing endlessly.

‘If you want to chat, then chat! Why would you continue to maintain such a long distance!’ So long as he advanced a step, the other party would take two steps back with a hearty smile. Although Han Li had no intention to kill him, the other party’s degree of cautiousness caused Han Li to be dumbfounded.

Chapter 194: The Secret Information Of The Central Area

However, Han Li was not impatient! The central area of the forbidden area was truly different from the outer regions.

In areas outside of the central area, spiritual grasses and wondrous fruits for the most part grew without patterns and at random; one could find traces of them at any location, and it was often first come first serve. Those who managed to pick them would also immediately retreat far away. Thus, in these areas, conflicts over medicinal ingredients very rarely occurred. More often, people would die either because they were being cleaned up by other people or because others were killing them to steal their treasures.

However, in the central area, things were not the same! According to the lucky disciples who had been able to return, this central area was very large, taking up almost a third of the forbidden area, and was entirely encircled and surrounded by the stone wall. If one started counting from the four large copper doors, the entire area could be split into three outer layers. It was similar to a common fruit, containing the skin, the “meat”, and the pit; each layer was very distinct. How very peculiar!

The elegant picturesque place that Han Li was currently in was the outermost layer of the central area.

According to the information, the distance to the next layer was actually not too large; it should only be half a kilometer. Inside this layer, the plants and flowers were all incredibly rare and scarcely

seen, not easily found elsewhere in this world. However, very few of these could be used to create spiritual medicines for them to be of any practical use to cultivators. Everybody could only admire and fiddle around with them.

Many people from the Seven Great Sects reasoned that this layer was purposefully arranged in this way by the master of the forbidden area, intending to turn this layer into a flower garden of sorts. The extremely eye-catching and contested plants were originally used by the owner of the forbidden areas to relax and enjoy. If one wanted to find anything of use, it would be better to go to other areas to look, and one would comparatively need to worry less!

The high-grade spiritual medicines that were useful to cultivators all grew within the second layer of the central area. The disciples from various sects entering this area were all mostly aiming for this layer. The three main ingredients for refining the Foundation Establishment Pill were also in this layer and were naturally their main goal. Han Li was also determined to get these spiritual ingredients!

Speaking of this second layer, when Han Li merely saw the information related to it, he was stunned for quite a while!

This second layer was a huge ring-shaped mountain range; the entire year, it was completely sealed off by fog so dense that one couldn't see their hand in front of their face. This mountain also contained caves, secret valleys, cliffs, and other natural formations. There were also stone houses, stone temples, and other human constructs, as well as many kinds of spiritual

ingredients grew in these locations.

(TL: 'ring-shaped mountain range' means a ring of mountains chained together)

The materials that the ugly man and Han Li had primarily exchanged were the distribution charts of the locations of these spiritual ingredients. This was because nobody could guarantee that when they walked into these locations, the currently existing materials would exist in the area which they were in. Thus, in this aspect, the more distribution charts one had, the better, since one could more easily piece the information together and begin searching!

However, the fog on these mountains was too thick and wide! When cultivators normally entered this mountain, they would permanently be lost within this dense fog and could only slowly feel their way forwards, one step at a time. As for whether or not they could emerge again, that depended entirely on their own luck.

But what caused one's head to hurt even more was that countless demonic beasts lived on the ring-shaped mountain range, from the lower grade one Flame Mouse and Chasing Wind Rabbit to the peak grade one Golden Light Python and Ice Fire Wolf. It roughly contained all of the grade one demonic beasts that the Seven Great Sects had heard or would hear about in the future.

Even the seven or eight of the weakest of demonic beasts could be easily dealt with by a sixth or seventh layer cultivator. However, if the the elite disciples from the Seven Great Sects were to meet peak-level beasts, their only option was to escape as quickly as

possible.

Luckily, the last kind of demonic beast was very rare in these mountains, and most of them had become guardians of some spiritual ingredients. It would be unlikely to come across them!

Thus, the majority of the more vicious demonic beasts were of upper grade one. However, they could be easily dealt with under the cooperation of many of the elite disciples. Of course, if one were to run into them alone, a bloody battle would be inevitable.

Regardless of whether it was the dense fog on top of the mountain or the demonic beasts that occupied the mountain, if they were to encounter one of these alone, these proud and arrogant elite disciples might reluctantly try to take a risk and enter to pick spiritual ingredients. However, if two of them encountered each other, they would have no choice but to look at each other in dismay. Going up and down the mountain under these circumstances was definitely a one-way trip!

Thus, the first few groups of disciples that had ever entered the forbidden area only picked some normal spiritual ingredients outside the central area before considering it done. They had never entered the ring-shaped mountains before!

However, a few excursions later, a cultivator from the Masked Moon Sect had racked his brains and defined a magic treasure called “Precious Moon Sun Pearl”. This object actually could not attack enemies or protect oneself; its only use was to emit a strange light that could pierce through many kinds of dense fog or poisonous miasma. It was specially created for use in the forbidden

area!

As expected, the Masked Moon Sect disciples that obtained this treasure were able to shine very brightly in the next opening of the forbidden area!

With their backs faced against the other sects, and after getting rid of most of the dense fog, they began to reap the rewards of the ring-shaped mountains. Relying on that time's harvest, they produced large quantities of Foundation Establishment Pills; then, they broadly recruited other disciples, and their sect's strength increased greatly. From then on, the Masked Moon Sect was established as the State of Yue's top cultivator sect.

However, as the saying goes, there wasn't a wall in this world that didn't let wind through! News of the Masked Moon Sect's use of the Precious Moon Sun Pearl to harvest a great amount of spiritual ingredients still spread. Not long after, the other six sects came looking for them, unwilling to let them keep their profit to themselves.

(TL: "There isn't a wall in this world that doesn't let wind through" means that there is no such thing as an absolute secret.)

The Masked Moon Sect, unwilling to anger everyone yet also unwilling to give up their precious pearl like this, finally gave it up after bargaining with the other six sects. Ever since, this became the common item of the Seven Great Sects.

The Seven Great Sects would take turns wielding this treasure.

After every trip to the forbidden area, the sect holding the precious pearl would have to hand it over to another sect for preservation.

However, regardless of which sect controlled the precious pearl, as soon as they entered into the forbidden area, disciples of that sect would have to, under the supervision of disciples from other sects, use this treasure at a certain time period according to a rule that was set beforehand. One could not purposefully hasten or delay the dispelling of the fog.

This way, all of the disciples that had reached the central area on time could enter the ring-shaped mountain range at the same time to pick spiritual ingredients. This method appeared incredibly fair.

This kind of agreement made it seem as if the Masked Moon Sect had suffered heavy losses, since they had no choice but to give up their dream of claiming the spiritual ingredients in the forbidden area for themselves. However, the Masked Moon Sect had been able to avoid the destruction of their entire sect, leaving them the opportunity to gradually increase their strength.

As of current, the Masked Moon Sect was the most outstanding one of the Seven Great Sects, and its strength could be said to be bottomless! If the various sects did not join together, it would be impossible to defeat them!

This was also the reason why Han Li was not impatient and couldn't calmly lie to the ugly man!

This time, the Seven Great Sects had already arranged the time

for the clearing of the dense fog before entering. It would be on the morning of the third day.

Earlier, Han Li had no time to rest and was rushing towards the central area precisely because he was afraid that he would have been stopped by somebody, thus preventing him from entering the mountain when it was time. Now, since he had already entered the central area, there was no need to be anxious anymore! If he were to rush to the second layer now, he would only be there to stare at the dense fog!

As for the third layer within the center of the forbidden area, it was even more mysterious!

As long as one stood at the peak of the ring-shaped mountains, anyone could clearly see that within the vast area contained by the second layer, there was a huge, soaring pagoda roughly three hundred meters tall erected in the central area. Surrounding the pagoda was a dense, green forest, causing the water flow to be obscure around the pagoda. This place was the supposed third layer and was also the centermost part of the forbidden area!

When the elders from the Seven Great Sects heard the descriptions given by their own disciples, they immediately knew that it was the dwelling place of the owner of the forbidden area. They truly coveted the items inside of this pagoda!

However, at the border between the second and third level, there was a strong restrictive barrier with an unknown name still operating, a layer that stopped all of the disciples who tried to barge their way in through it. This restrictive barrier was not one

that could be broken by a Qi Condensation cultivator, and even Foundation Establishment cultivators and above also had no way of entering that section of the forbidden area. Thus, the items contained in this pagoda were still a complete mystery!

Han Li had no interest in the huge pagoda in the third layer! To him, being able to find enough spiritual ingredients in the second layer and then immediately being able to retreat was already cause to thank the heavens and gods for their blessings and protection.

Han Li coped with the ugly man in front of him for a full quarter of an hour before he finally freed himself from his nagging, entered a patch of vegetation on the side, and immediately disappeared! Before disappearing, he glanced at the opposing person and saw that that Zhong Wu continued to lazily stand in the same spot, as if he didn't have the slightest intention of leaving!

It seemed as if these “experts” would not rest until they had gotten rid of the vast majority of the disciples who had come to take advantage of the situation for their own gain! Most likely, the other three doors would have people who were doing the same thing!

As Han Li thought this, he began to search for something in a place far away from the copper doors.

Underneath a giant tree, Han Li discovered an inconspicuous tree hollow, causing his heart to become happy.

After slipping in headfirst, he prepared some small protective measures at the opening of the whole, and without thinking about anything else, he proceeded to fall into a deep sleep.

Han Li needed to rest well, because when the fog around the ring-shaped mountains was to be broken early next morning, only the Heavens knew what would happen! He first had to recover peak condition before completing his business.

However, he believed that those who could stand in front of the ring-shaped mountains tomorrow morning, waiting for the dense fog to be broken, would definitely not be very numerous! Each one would likely not be easier to deal with than that Feng Yue!

Han Li slept very soundly. It wasn't until early in the morning of the second day that he started to slowly awaken.

The most important day in the forbidden area finally was drawing near!

Chapter 195: The Strength Of The “Precious Moon Sun Pearl”

After Han Li awoke, he did not immediately leave the tree hollow. Instead, he sat down cross-legged in the tree.

The spiritual power surged within his body, and his magic power had returned to its peak.

The feeling of soreness had already disappeared without a trace, and his strength was vigorous.

Han Li had finished inspecting himself, and he slowly opened his eyes. His heart was incredibly satisfied!

This was when he stood up and inspected the talismans and magic tools in his storage pouch, finishing up his last-minute preparations.

Han Li precious did not have the time to carefully look through the few storage pouches he previously took from the fully bearded man and his associate. Now, he would naturally search through them once to see if there were any usable magic tools.

Truthfully, regardless of whether it was the storage pouches of the fully bearded man and his partner or the storage pouches that they had taken from others, the magic tools in the pouches were numerous, but their quality was incredibly low. After seeing this, Han Li was at a loss for words!

Combined, the five storage pouches contained twenty three magic tools – five low-grade ones, seven mid-grade ones, and eleven-high grade ones.

One of the storage pouches actually only contained two low-grade magic tools and two mid-grade ones; there were no high-grade magic tools at all. This discovery caused Han Li to be stunned for a long time, causing him to sigh with sorrow.

The net worth of normal disciples and elite disciples were really as different as the heavens and the earth!

This pile of storage pouches did not contain a single top-grade magic tool. No wonder when Han Li had bound the fully bearded man with his “Earth Prison Technique”, he seemed to have no method to escape. He could only watch as he was crushed to death by the “Golden Light Brick”.

When Han Li thought about the number of top-grade magic tools that the woman with many treasures and Feng Yue had, he felt incredibly helpless towards the poverty of regular disciples!

No wonder when other people saw his weak cultivation base, they would subconsciously think that his strength was feeble and could be easily bullied. No one would consider the question of what strong magic tools he might have.

Now, Han Li could finally understand why so many disciples had been so excited when they had found out that the Yellow Maple

Valley's meeting hall was handing out high-grade magic tools! It seemed like the Yellow Maple Valley that he was part of treated these average disciples pretty well! They were actually willing to use several scores of high-grade magic tools to encourage their morale!

In reality, Han Li had guessed incorrectly concerning this matter! Even if the various sects sent out their elite disciples to the forbidden area, they very rarely owned any top-grade magic tools.

People like the woman with many treasures, who had top-grade magic weapons from head to toe, were very few in number even among the elite disciples. In addition, most of them came from influential backgrounds. Regular elite disciples would fall short even in flattery!

In this way, Han Li, who had three or four top-grade magic tools on him, could already cause these so-called elite disciples to drool! All in all, before reaching Core Formation, with the exception of the treasure talismans, each extra top-grade magic tool could change one's strength beyond recognition!

While Han Li was in the Yellow Maple Valley, because his contact with other Senior Martial Brothers had been too rare, he was an amateur when it came to the matters of the cultivator world. He still subconsciously believed that the elite disciples all had a pile of top-grade magic tools!

This was not surprising; ever since he had had the huge battle with "Senior Martial Brother Lu", all of the enemies that he had encountered were owners of top-grade magic tools. This caused

him to give rise to the misconception that top-grade magic tools were not rare.

Now, although he had realized the regular disciples' lack of magic tools, he still did not completely understand the worth of top-grade magic tools. Was this would be a misfortune or a blessing to Han Li?

Han Li naturally neglected the low and mid-grade magic tools; he would not consider using them. He then tried out each of the high-grade magic tools before selecting three of the strongest and most practical ones to use as backup magic tools.

A deep blue flying dagger, a golden alms bowl, and a jade pot! These were the items that Han Li had chosen.

The flying dagger and the golden alms bowl were all pure attack-type magic tools, and there was nothing of particular note about them. However, the jade pot was uncommon; it actually was a rarely seen support-type magic tool.

The pot could spurt out a green poisonous miasma and surround the area near the enemies, causing them to die from poison! At a first glance, the usefulness of this pot seemed to be pretty good, but in fact it was a magic tool of little value. Any barriers of the five elements could all block the poison; it was impossible to use it to actually poison a cultivator!

If it wasn't because Han Li thought that this green poisonous fog could temporarily obstruct the enemy's vision and bring the

opponent a certain amount of inconvenience, he truly might not have chosen this magic tool.

Once he sorted out everything on him, Han Li silently slipped out of the tree hole after estimating the time. Then, after determining his direction, he began to slowly travel on his way.

It was definitely out of the question to fly directly into the ring-shaped mountain after the dense fog had been dispersed! He would be noticed by countless demonic beasts that could fly and would be surrounded and attacked to death. In bygone years, there had been a few small paths to safely enter the ring-shaped mountain. Han Li directly headed towards the closest tunnel.

The entrance to the tunnel was not too far, and with a bit of effort Han Li hurried to the location specified by the information!

After hiding behind some large tree, looking at the limitless fog considered to be as big as the sky, Han Li was truly stunned!

The misty fog virtually covered the heavens and the earth! One could forget about seeing the entrance to the ring-shaped mountain; Han Li could not see clearly even one Zhang into the thick fog!

No wonder nobody had dared to climb this mountain before the “Precious Moon Sun Pearl” existed! When he thought about the fact that inside this fog one would have to suffer constantly from the attacks of various demonic beasts that would come and go without warning, he was speechless for quite some time!

Since the fog was still so large, it seemed as if the Heavenly Imperial Fortress disciples in possession of the precious pearl had not yet begun to activate their spell and dispel the fog!

Thinking in this manner, Han Li stood behind the tree and began to silently wait!

Directly facing the large fog, the place where Han Li was waiting was overgrown with lots of wild trees and wild brush. There was no problem for ten or so people to hide in them.

Although Han Li had not discovered the existence of other people all around him, he also knew that other people were definitely nearby. After all, there were only a few of these routes going up the mountain. It was only because the time for entering the mountain was imminent that other people hadn't paid any attention to his arrival.

Time passed by hour by hour.

After Han Li had bitterly waited three to four hours, he suddenly felt a frightening spiritual power coming from his southwest direction. Next, a soaring white pillar of light flew into the sky at a faraway location! In the skies above the boundless sea of fog, the light aggregated into a huge sphere of light.

Although the light sphere had been formed, the light pillar didn't seem to have any intention of stopping and continued to incessantly pour energy into the sphere. Thus, the sphere of light

got larger and larger and more and more dazzling. Finally, it was actually as if a new sun had risen into the sky, causing people to not dare look at it!

A brief moment later, the light column disappeared from view, only leaving that gigantic sphere of light floating high in the sky.

However, the duration of the sphere of light was pitifully short; in the blink of an eye, it began to distort its shape, and its surface began to depress like a piece of dough. This caused Han Li, who had seen the whole sequence of events, to be stupefied; his mouth hung wide open, and he forgot to close it!

With an earth-shaking “Bang!”, the huge sphere of light finally burst open high in the sky, and became countless fist-sized, beautiful dots of light that floated down. They sprinkled down towards the large stretch of fog like an extremely glamorous rain of light.

When each sphere of white light fell into the dense fog, it immediately caused the nearby dense fog to become alive like a flood dragon and automatically rush towards the heart of the spheres of light. However, the thick fog was immediately dissolved upon contact with the spheres of light, but the spheres of light also dimmed significantly.

When more of the spheres of light came into contact with the large fog, the entire area of dense fog changed like a frightening landslide or a tsunami, and all of the mist was incessantly boiling and roiling! It was just as if a huge demonic beast was resisting being bound, and was in the last throes of its resistance.

Both of Han Li's eyes stared unblinkingly at everything that had happened; it was the first time in his entire life that he had ever witnessed the true strength of an incredible magic treasure! In the aftermath of his shock, the depths of his heart were filled with feelings of envy and desire!

After the struggle between the fog and the sphere of light, the fog finally began to slowly thin out. The silhouette of the dangerous and tall ring-shaped mountain appeared before Han Li and others for the first time.

“How tall!”

This was the admiring exclamation of all those who had clearly seen the ring-shaped mountains, and Han Li was no exception as one of these people!

The ring-shaped mountains before him was truly frighteningly tall!

Looking up, the mountains appeared to reach a height of a three kilometers. It was soaring through the clouds so the peak was not visible. Strange eye-catching cliffs and rocks were abundant on the mountains' exterior. Those that were not taking cover near giant trees were found throughout the mountains. What caused people's hearts to be even more surprised was that the two sides of this mountain extended indefinitely into the distance. One did not know how long one would have to continue in order to figure out its extremities.

However, the mountain ridge on this side of the mountains in front of Han Li and the others was incredibly flat, not nearly as steep as other directions. It seemed as if this was the road to take up the mountains.

At this time, a few faint and low demonic beast howls could be heard coming from within the mountains. Their sound was mournful and sinister, causing people who heard to tremble with fear!

Han Li was currently staring to the point of being dazed!

With a “whoosh”, a yellow shadow shot out of the patch of underbrush on Han Li’s side like an arrow. He leaped into the midst of the dark mountain and disappeared from view.

This movement seemed to have triggered the nerves of the other hidden people. Immediately, several more people jumped out at the same time and rushed forwards together. Right as they were about to enter the forests on the mountain, however, a few people slightly widened the distance and entered into different areas of the ring-shaped mountains!

Han Li had not yet emerged. He planned to observe exactly what kind of people would choose the same route to enter the mountain as him!

Chapter 196: Han Li's Plan

In a short amount of time, a blue-clothed youth wearing an expression of cold indifference, an elderly Daoist Priest with an entire head of white hair, and an azure-clothed gorgeous young woman walked out in succession. They all reached a tacit understanding and chose different locations to enter the mountainous forest.

Han Li continued to wait for about another quarter of an hour. Seeing that no other people appeared, he performed a last-minute check on the items he had and copying the people before him, chose a direction that nobody had yet walked into and silently dived in.

What Han Li didn't know was that, not long after he entered, the ugly man Zhong Yue that he had seen just yesterday appeared in front of the tunnel. He gazed at the dark road to go up the mountain and coldly laughed a few times; he released ten or so yellow dots that flew into the mountainous forest, then calmly followed after them.

At this time within the forbidden area, near the broken restrictive entrance, the people that the Seven Great Sects had left behind as guards looked worriedly in the direction of the forbidden area. Han Li's Martial Ancestor Li was one of those people.

However, it could not be known whether he was worried about the success of his own disciples or if he was more worried about losing his bet!

The mood of the other Core Formation Daoist Priest from the Clear Void Sect was not much better! Speaking of which, ever since that eccentric Senior Qiong from the Masked Moon Sect had forced his way into the bet, he no longer had any self-confidence in the bet that they had made beforehand. In an instant, it became apparent he was somewhat worried about his own gains and losses.

This was not surprising; the blood of a flood dragon's inner Dan had been incredibly difficult to obtain. He had basically spent all of his family fortune to obtain it. If he lost it so easily to someone else, even if his attained mental state had been higher, perhaps he would be unable to sleep for a number of years in a row because of heartache!

The Daoist Priest stealthily sized up the only person in this group who had a composed expression: the young female leader Fairy Ni Chang from the Masked Moon Sect.

The sole female in the midst of these seven great Core Formation experts had not revealed any trace of worry ever since the disciples from the Seven Great Sects had entered the forbidden area.

The more the Daoist Priest watched the woman's smiling appearance, the stronger his anxiety became. When he connected this to strange Senior Qiong's expression of having a card up his sleeve when making the bet, he felt the blood of the flood dragon's inner Dan seemingly fly away from his own pocket and had already become the possession of another!

As he thought this, the concerned expression on his face became even more strong! People who didn't know this would have truly

mistakenly believe that he was deeply worried for the disciples from his sect inside the forbidden area!

After some more time, the Daoist Priest finally could not endure it any longer. Taking advantage of a moment when no one was paying attention, he quietly moved closer to Martial Ancestor Li, asking with a concerned expression, “Martial Ancestor Li, the Yellow Maple Valley disciples that you sent out this time should be pretty talented! Even so, the people from our two sects might really lose to that strange Senior Qiong! Still, this Daoist Priest has some faith in the disciples from the Clear Void Sect that entered the forbidden area!”

“What are you trying to say? Does Daoist brother look down upon our Yellow Maple Valley?” Martial Ancestor Li began to display an expression of displeasure upon hearing this.

“Haha! Of course not, this Daoist Priest just feels a little peculiar about the disciples that the Masked Moon Sect sent out this time. I just can’t feel at ease!” the Daoist Priest laughed, explaining himself with a big smile.

“You’re not the only one! This Li also perceives that something is fishy. In previous times, when have the disciples the Masked Moon Sect sent out been so young? And they are all in male-female pairs! Could it be because they think this trip to the forbidden area is for the brats to play house?” Martial Ancestor Li said sullenly; apparently, he had also been unable to feel at ease concerning this time’s bet.

When the Daoist Priest heard what Martial Ancestor Li said, he

incessantly and repeatedly nodded his head, apparently very much in agreement with what he had just said.

“However, this fellow Daoist should be at ease; since Li dared to make this bet, he definitely has some trust in the disciples from his sect. Their strength will definitely not be lower than disciples from your sect,” Martial Ancestor Li said slowly after giving the Daoist Priest a glance filled with deep meaning. His voice contained some heroic spirit.

“Heh heh! Since Benefactor has said this, this Daoist Priest feels much more relieved! Then I will not disturb you any more.” The Daoist Priest’s expression immediately relaxed upon hearing the answer that his heart wanted, and he laughingly took his leave. He returned to his original location and sat down to regain his composure, quietly waiting for the results to come out a few days from now.

Martial Ancestor Li, after following the Daoist priest as he left with his eyes, suddenly snorted softly. Using only a voice that he could hear, he faintly said to himself:

“Fu Yunzi, you old facetious Daoist, don’t think that I wouldn’t know whatever plan you come up with! Aren’t you hoping that our two sects will join hands to triumph over the Masked Moon Sect, only to have your Clear Void Sect come to pressure our Yellow Maple Valley? Heh heh! Although I don’t know what kind of impressive disciples the Clear Void Sect has sent into the forbidden area, but this time our valley has sent out the top three Qi Condensation disciples like a hive of bees. Otherwise, do you think I would have made this bet with you all?”

As Martial Ancestor Li spoke, his face revealed a bit of cunningness; no trace of the concerned expression from before could be found. Clearly, he was also an old fox who kept things hidden.

Han Li naturally did not know of the scheming of the two Core Formation experts outside of the forbidden area; his path was currently being blocked by a brown, massive wild boar.

This wild boar, apart from its skin color and huge body size, as well it being many meters tall, appeared to be exactly the same as a normal wild boar.

However, as soon as Han Li saw this beast, he immediately recognized that it was one of the most commonly seen demonic beasts on the ring-shaped mountain, the “Mountain Pushing Hog”. This demonic beast, other than having rough skin and a slightly larger strength, only knew an innate “Stone Skin Magic”. Its intelligence was also incredibly low, so it would not be hard to deal with.

At this time, the “Mountain Pushing Boar” huffed deeply a few times, and in a flash of yellow light, its entire body was covered by a shining white stone armor. In turn, it aggressively charged fiercely in Han Li’s direction.

Han Li’s expression did not change; he stood in the same place and quietly waited for the charging attack of this beast right until it was only about twenty meters away from it. He then waved his

hand, and his figure flashed; he had already shifted behind the demonic beast.

“Mountain Pushing Boar.”

Its truly huge body continued to charge towards the direction Han Li was originally standing in for about ten meters before panting once; then, its entire body, from the tip of its nose to its tail, neatly split into two in one moment, and its multicolored internal organs spilled all over the ground. It had actually been completely cut open by Han Li's thin thread magic tool!

Han Li retrieved the transparent thread. Glancing at the dead “Mountain Pushing Boar”, he gently shook his head and immediately jumped on top of a tree to leave this location. This was because he knew that soon the smell of blood from the demonic beast's corpse would attract a huge wave of demonic beasts with extremely acute senses of smell. It would still be best for him to slip away luckily as early as possible!

It had already been a few hours since Han Li had entered the ring-shaped mountain's dense forest. However, in this short amount of time, he had unfortunately encountered four demonic beasts.

Of these four, three had been low-level ones, and Han Li naturally slaughtered them in one blow without the slightest bit of courtesy. However, that medium-level Flying Feather Peacock had five-colored tail feathers that could independently chase after and injure both people and defenses, causing Han Li's head to hurt quite a bit. Luckily, although it was classified as birdkind, its speed

was not actually fast. Thus, afterwards Han Li decided he might as well practice his movement technique, and in one breath he left it behind, disappearing without a trace. It was only in this way that he had avoided this pointless battle.

Today, Han Li incessantly sighed as he leaped around from tree to tree as if he were flying.

Now, he finally knew the extent to which the ring-shaped mountains was populated with demonic beasts.

For the time being, he was still in the outer fringes; the majority of the demonic beasts he had met had been in the low-level and were not too hard to deal with. But in another period of time, when he had entered into the deeper parts of the ring-shaped mountain, perhaps medium or high-level demonic beasts would appear in waves. At that time, other than fleeing in a panic, Han Li was truly unable to think of any other tactic for escaping.

No wonder the amount of information on the hiding locations of these spiritual medicines was so little! Perhaps the disciples who had entered this mountain before had spent the greater half of their energy hiding from these demonic beasts, and the remaining time could only be used to search those seven or eight locations once. However, this was still not enough to guarantee a harvest every time one searched!

“It looks like my chances of gathering enough spiritual medicines is not too high,” Han Li thought with melancholy.

The direction Han Li was currently darting in was the a concealed cave where the “Purple Monkey Flower” grew.

Based on the information, this location shouldn't have any large value. Because this cave had been harvested once only in the past hundred or more years, the only things inside should be some seedlings close to becoming ripe; there was no way to use them to concoct pills.

“A seedling?” When Han Li thought of this, he couldn't help but lightly smile for a moment!

What Han Li needed was this seedling that these bystanders would not touch!

The reason why he dared to take the odd risk of entering the forbidden area and why he was so sure that he could snatch food from the jaws of a tiger in the midst of all these “experts” to obtain the “spiritual medicines of heaven and earth”! The main reason was that from the start he had set his sights on the yet-to-ripen seedlings! Only in this way could he avoid clashing with disciples from other sects as much as possible. Then he would be able to run to a few more locations, and gather some more items that were useless in other people's eyes.

When he took these spiritual medicine seedlings back with him, he could use the green liquid from the mysterious small bottle to hasten their growth. In this way, it was not too different from directly picking ripe spiritual medicines.

Although he had heard from that Martial Uncle Ma that these saplings could not be preserved for too long outside of the forbidden area, only able to survive one to two years or so, this amount of time was already sufficient to accelerate their ripening cycle. After all, in order to be used in the Foundation Establishment Pill, their age did not need to be too great; merely four or five hundred years was sufficient for them to be used to refine the pill.

Now, the only complication was that he didn't know if the remaining three days were enough for him to harvest enough quantities of spiritual medicines. Because the locations where the seedlings grew were all over the place, and adding on the fact that he could be obstructed by those demonic beasts along the way or start conflicts with disciples from other sects, Han Li felt unsure about everything.

Chapter 197: Demonic Beast – Giant Centipede (unedited)

“I’ve arrived. Which cave is this?” After four hours, Han Li stood on a black rock about half a person high. He was sizing up a cave opening that was several meters tall.

“It seems to be nothing out of the ordinary!” Han Li didn’t rashly enter but instead carefully observed nearby for a while. Although it could be said he was running short on time, he would never carelessly put himself into danger!

The secret cave mentioned in the information would appear quite unremarkable from the outside. As Han Li was traveling, he saw many similar simple caves in the wild that lacked even the slightest remarkable trait. He also didn’t know how the original founders were able to discover this cave. This caused Han Li to admire them even more!

After the time it took to make a cup of tea, Han Li was convinced that there weren’t any demonic beasts or anybody laying in ambush nearby and carefully walked toward the cave.

The cave was completely natural and consisted of a light azure mountain stone. There were no traces of artificial digging within. Han Li came to this conclusion after he looked at the cave walls as he walked toward the cave.

Then, Han Li’s body flashed and stealthily walked into the cave. However, just as he walked about ten steps, Han Li stopped. This

was because after he turned two corners, his surroundings had already become pitch dark.

Han Li wrinkled his brow and searched through his storage pouch, taking out a moonlight stone the size of an egg. After he took it out, a soft white light clearly illuminated the vicinity. When Han Li saw this, he could not help but shake his head.

His original intention was to silently tread deeper into the depths of the cave and see whether or not there was a demonic beast guarding within. If there was one, Han Li would stealthily give it a lethal strike and save his effort! However, with the appearance of the moonlight stone, he became a clear target. How could he mount a sneak attack now?

Han Li lightly held the shining moonlight stone in his hand. After a moment of hesitation, he used his other hand to slap on an earth attribute defensive barrier. Then he crouched and continued on with light steps.

As the cave's interior was not spacious like the wilds, his fast movement technique was certain to meet restrictions. With a layer of protection on his body, he was much more at ease. Although his speed was greatly reduced, he obviously couldn't choose to have both speed and protection. Han Li clearly understood this and therefore had no complaints about it.

This cave was very long and narrow. After Han Li walked for no less than a quarter hour, he saw no sign of reaching the end. This caused his heart to feel apprehension and could not help but doubt that he had found the wrong location and instead found a nest of

top grade demonic beasts!

Fortunately, after walking several tens of meters, Han Li's worry had disappeared once he looked to the corner on his left. That was because at the left corner there were many faint white lights illuminating his sight.

When Han Li saw this, his heart was filled with joy. He quickly put away his moonlight stone and quietly walked through. Since this place already had lights located at the corners, it seemed he would be able to continue on with his original plan!

Stealthily, Han Li slowly peeked the corner and what he saw caused him joy. But soon after, he was inwardly grumbling.

In front of him was truly the end of the cave. Furthermore it was a large natural stone hall. Not only were there many shining glittering stalactites, but near the interior there was a small purple stone wall with three to four small light azure flowers growing on it.

This small flowers were about an inch large. Their several petals were all bafflingly curled in the same direction, unexpectedly creating a unique appearance. From a distance it looked as if they were several small monkeys smiling at something comical; this truly caused one to be greatly startled!

‘There is no question, these are definitely the “Violet Monkey Flowers”. Although the color of its petals and stem were azure, it was because they weren't yet mature.’ After Han Li saw these

flowers, he immediately thought this with pleasant surprise.

However, when he turned his gaze toward the ground of the azure stone wall, Han Li's expression immediately grew bitter. There were actually a giant centipede about three meter long lying on its stomach. It had shiny pitch black spikes on its shell, antennas about a meter long, and a terrifying sinister appearance. Without yet moving, Han Li became greatly frightened.

Although he had yet to kill any poisonous insect type demonic beasts, he had long heard of their terrible reputation.

According to the words of others, poisonous insect type demonic beasts were far more troublesome than the bird or beast types. Furthermore, the majority of them had extremely powerful poison, often causing people to die immediately upon contact. That was why if it wasn't required, it was no wonder it that people avoided provoking these kind of demonic beasts as much as possible.

Since the centipede was this large, at the very least, it should be a mid grade demonic beast. Being high grade also wouldn't be out of the question. As such, how could Han Li not take in a cold breath and grimace.

Now, he had to provoke it as this centipede was guarding the "Purple Monkey Flowers. If he did not take care of this large poisonous insect, to think of picking the spiritual medicines off the wall was pure idiocy.

Han Li held his breath and slowly withdrew his head. His movements were extremely careful to avoid waking up the huge centipede that seemed asleep.

He leaned against the stone wall and with wrinkled his eyebrows, he lowered his head, pondering of how he should deal with this demonic beast.

By relying on the might of his top grade magic tools, attacking rashly wouldn't be out of the question. By just using the golden light brick treasure talisman, he would be able to flatten the demonic beast in one slam. However, that action would consume quite a bit of magic power and he would be unable to maintain his peak condition.

The road back was still quite long! He was certain that he would be facing more and more dangers and because he had to rush against time, he could not spend half a day to travel back, meditate and replenish his magic power.

After a long while of hard thought, Han Li had a moment of brilliance and thought of a good plan.

Before he made a move, he first cautiously stretched his neck to take a look at the centipede. When he saw that it was sitting there motionlessly, he calmed down. He then faintly smiled and disappeared into the darkness of the path.

Not long after, Han Li then returned, beaming with happiness.

The protective barrier he wore could no longer be seen. Furthermore he did not continue moving stealthily but rather turned the corner with a swagger, walking into the large hall where the giant centipede laid.

With Han Li's loud movements, how could the giant centipede not noticed. If it hadn't, a better name for it would've been 'stupid beast' instead of demonic beast. When it saw Han Li, The several meter long centipede immediately grew vigilant and raised its head and continuously waved two coarse long antennas that released sent out strange and extremely frightening hissing noises.

When Han Li saw this he did not say anything and raised his hand. Several small fireballs flew toward it at extreme speeds and struck the beast's head, producing a series of explosions.

After the blaze faded away, Han Li clearly saw the demonic beast's head remain a shiny jet black after being struck by the fireballs, and it actually hadn't left the slightest mark, leaving Han Li speechless. It seemed that what others have said wasn't wrong. This poisonous insect demonic beast was truly troublesome!

Although the huge centipede did not receive any injuries, it was thoroughly infuriated by Han Li's recent provocation!

From its mouth with two sharp teeth, it shot out a cloud of red poison mist, overbearingly surrounding Han Li. It seemed it wanted to drown Han Li in the poison.

Han Li naturally wouldn't foolishly stay still and allow even the

slightest of this incomparably strange poison to touch him. Without a protective barrier slowing him down, as the tip of his feet touched the ground, he became faster than the poison mist flying around in the hall and turned around, running out of the hall. It appeared as if he was afraid of the demonic beast's poison mist and fled from defeat.

The huge centipede naturally did not let Han Li easily leave, and slithered extremely fast toward him. It followed him through the large hall as if it were wind. It seemed that its mad rush was no less fast than Han Li. When Han Li turned his head to take a look, he became shocked and quickened his pace, increasing the distance between them and disappearing into the passage.

The giant centipede hissed strange sounds and followed without hesitation. The demonic beast had slithered through this passage countless times. It was naturally much more familiar with it than Han Li and was able to chase him down not long after. It could already clearly see the Han Li's back.

The demonic beast centipede was greatly joyed. Its feet grew faster, fiercely charging forward!

At this moment, Han Li suddenly stopped. He actually turned his head around, looking at the demonic beast with a chuckle and no longer running any further. It seemed that he completely abandoned the idea of running!

As such, in the blink of an eye the giant centipede leapt toward Han Li who was only about ten meters away. Just as it was about to joyfully tear and ravage the small human before it with its fangs, it

felt a fierce pain from its abdomen, causing it to stop. It immediately fell to the floor from the pain as black poisonous blood spurted forth from its body.

Although it did not know when, the huge centipede had unexpectedly been cut by an extremely sharp blade at its weakest part, the abdomen. Without knowing, it was neatly cut open and actually received a large wound. With such a mortal wound, it was no wonder the centipede was suffering this much!

Standing to the side, Han Li naturally wouldn't let go of this opportunity to beat it while its down. He raised his hand and released a sphere of golden light and a sparkling blue wind blade toward the centipede's two antennas.

Chapter 198: Conflict

With a “Bang!”, the two high-grade magic tools merely made two small open cracks in the antennas before being crisply being bounced aside, causing Han Li to be temporarily stunned.

“So hard! They could almost compare to the quality of a mid-grade magic tool!” Han Li secretly cried out that he was lucky; if it wasn’t for him using some small tactics, dealing with this huge centipede would really waste a lot of time.

Han Li, seeing that the flying dagger and the golden alms bowl weren’t very effective, retrieved them in passing.

Although this bug had already received a mortal wound, its vitality was too vigorous, and it continued to incessantly roll around. It seemed like it would not die in a short amount of time. Thus, he knitted his eyebrows and displayed his movement technique; with a burst of speed, he flashed over the demonic beast’s head and showed no interest in whether the beast lived or died. Directly following the tunnel passageway, he returned to the stone room.

Within the stone room, the few “Purple Monkey Flower” seedlings were still waiting there safe and sound, causing Han Li’s heart to be filled with joy!

He took out a jade box about as large as a bundle of branches from his storage pouch and placed it on the ground before using his flying dagger to carefully cut out the entire small purple rock

along with the “Purple Monkey Flower”. Then, he leveled the flying dagger and used it to carry the rock back to his hand. It was placed inside of the jade box and sealed off carefully.

When all of the spiritual medicines had been completely individually harvested by Han Li, it wasn't until they were all stored that he took a long, relaxed breath. His state of mind had greatly calmed down.

He stretched lazily, then carelessly swept over the stone room again to confirm that he hadn't overlooked anything in this place before calmly walking out.

When Han Li walked past the place where the giant centipede had received heavy damage, that demonic beast was already lying still on the ground. It was completely dead, and the huge pool of black, poisonous blood from its body caused this section of the cave to be pervaded by a strange smell that made people want to throw up. When Han Li smelled it, he felt somewhat dizzy and lightheaded.

Han Li startled, knowing that this was the effect of the poisonous nature of the blood diffusing into the air, so he quickly consumed some “Pure Spirit Powder”, causing the uncomfortable feeling to abate.

He walked about twenty meters away from the corpse of the centipede and stopped. Then, he let out his flying dagger and wildly stabbed it seven or eight times; seeing that it really had not moved at all, he finally relaxed and continued on his way.

But having just walked a few steps, Han Li's figure bent at the waist and stooped down to pull out a short black knife. He used two fingers to gently wipe off the black mud around the knife's edge, and the short knife immediately shone with golden light. In fact, it was one of the children blades of the "Gold Beetle Swarm Blades".

It turned out that the reason Han Li was able to so easily cut into the demonic beast's abdomen was because in the moment he had disappeared, he had stuck the eight children blades of the "Gold Beetle Swarm Blades" blade-side-up into the ground of the cave in one breath. He lined them up along the tunnel and left the front half of the incomparably sharp blades on the floor.

Because he was worried the golden blades would be too bright and would be discovered beforehand by the demonic beast, Han Li used some black silt to smother the blade's edge and turn it black, causing it to become the same color as the pitch-black cave. This way, it would be difficult for the demonic beast to discover it.

Thus, after chasing Han Li to this section of the cave, because the huge centipede was so close to the ground, its abdomen had been secretly sliced open by these golden blades stuck into the ground upside down, thus meeting the fate of being buried there. The poor poisonous bug, known as a high-level demonic beast, had yet to put to use its arsenal of extremely potent poisonous techniques, but just like that it had been carelessly and utterly plotted against by Han Li. This was truly an unjust way to die!

Although Han Li had yet to know the centipede that he had killed

was a high grade demonic beast, he knew that even if this poisonous bug hadn't been one, it definitely would've been at least one of the medium grade demonic beasts. Thus, he was extremely satisfied in his heart that he had been able to deal with this poisonous bug so easily!

Now, he took seven or eight steps in a row and bent over after every step. Finally, he had cleaned all of the golden blades and retrieved them. Then, he immediately raised his feet to leave the area when he inadvertently glanced at the corpse and hesitated for a moment before walking towards it.

As soon as he walked in front of the huge centipede's corpse, Han Li impolitely used the gold blade in his hand and cut towards the head, back, and tail sections, piercing them once. In the end he discovered that its back was the section that had the hardest shell; the gold blade's thrust could only penetrate half an inch deep. Only by continuing to apply force downwards could it slowly cut in.

Seeing this, Han Li no longer hesitated! He immediately released all of the recently retrieved eight Gold Beetle Swarm blades and expended a great deal of effort to cut off the shell of the centipede's back portion.

In no time, a few chunks of hard shell a few feet wide had been cut straight off and were carefully placed into his storage pouch. These were more than enough to block one attack from a top-quality magic tool and were good items that were hard to obtain. If they were to be made into a makeshift inner armor, it would definitely be very useful to him.

In reality, according to Han Li's original intention, he was itching to cut off all of the centipede's shell and bring it away. But if he were to do this, it would waste too much time, and currently, time was most sorely lacking!

Thus, Han Li could only leave the cave with a little regret, and he immediately shot towards the next already predetermined harvesting location. There similarly should be a few "Spiritual Sky Fruits" that had yet to ripen in that location.

Meanwhile, as Han Li was continuously following his plan, collecting various kinds of spiritual medicines that were yet to ripen, explosive conflicts had erupted between elite disciples in a few locations where everybody knew there were ripe spiritual medicines to harvest! In addition, there were only these few locations where people precisely knew the spiritual medicines had ripened. The huge conflict between the "experts" from various sects was inevitable!

Within a quiet valley southwest of Han Li, three people who were currently caught in a deadlock, each of them unwilling to back down over two "Purple Monkey Flowers", a plant that Han Li had just obtained.

Only, these two purple monkey flowers were not a pale-azure color, but rather a glamorous purple, and they released a thick smell of rare perfume. In addition, in front of these two strange purple flowers was a strange deer growing fire-red antlers from its head. Its body had been split into two and lay in a pool of blood; evidently, it died a long time ago.

Not far from the corpse of the strange beast, there were three people standing in a triangle, each with different robes. However, none of them made a move, as if they were very afraid of the other two.

“What exactly are the intentions of you two? This Flaming Antler Deer was killed by me, so the spiritual medicines should also belong to me!” Finally, one person opened his mouth with an expression full of rage.

The speaker was a roughly twenty-year-old youth wearing a blue robe. His appearance was very handsome, and his figure was slender. One of his hands held an azure-colored flying cross, and the other held a yellow pearl. The two objects dazzled with spiritual light; with one glance, one could tell that they were exceptional magic tools. No wonder that person was able to kill that seemingly abnormal high-level demonic beasts on his own.

“Daoist brother, I didn’t expect that we would meet again today; we both truly have a predestined fate!” This time, the one who spoke was an ordinary elderly man wearing an azure robe and leaning on a walking stick. He seemingly appeared to be quite amiable, but he in fact did not even acknowledge the youth’s inquiry, instead beginning to converse with the other middle-aged Daoist Priest.

“Yes, I also had not thought that I would run into Master Li again today!” said the Daoist Priest with a calm expression. He carried a plain and long sword in its sheath and similarly did not even glance at the youth.

The youth from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress flew into a rage; his own talent was not normal, his family background was highly regarded, and his figure was elegant and handsome. He had always been other people's focus no matter where he went, but now he was being humiliated in this way by these two fellows. How could he not become infuriated!

But before he was even able to open his mouth to say something else, the following sentences from the elder and the Daoist Priest immediately caused the color of his face to greatly change, and he began to panic.

“Let's not bring up the past. Today, this place has two spiritual medicines; it so happens that you and I can split them evenly. How about if each person gets one?” The elder did not speak any superfluous words and invited the Clear Void Sect Daoist Priest to an alliance in order to split the spiritual medicines.

When the middle-aged Daoist heard this, he did not appear to be surprised; instead, after a brief pause, he nodded his head and agreed, “We might as well. Our strength is roughly even; even if were to battle each other, two hundred injuries would be the result. Let's do it this way. I have no objections!”

The youth had clearly heard the conversation of the two people in front of him; he was both frightened and angered in his heart!

Although he knew his magic tools were extremely powerful, he instinctively felt that he would not be their opponent once they joined hands. However, if he were to just give up the spiritual medicines that he was just about to obtain like that, no matter

what he said he was still unwilling!

After a few hurried spins in his brain, the youth suddenly quickly flashed backwards and shot directly towards the two spiritual medicines. He wanted to grab the spiritual medicines and immediately escape far away.

“You’re courting death!”

The youth had just begun to move when the azure-robed elder’s face fell, and threw the walking stick in his hand. It became an azure streak of light that shot towards the youth. The speed of this walking stick, which had become azure light, was simply too quick; it had only flashed a couple of times before arriving in front of the youth, barring his path.

The youth was very stunned; what was this magic tool, and why was it so fast? However, since things had already progressed to this point, he gave it much thought. He lifted his hand and the his azure flying pitchfork went forward to meet the walking stick; however, his figure showed no sign of stopping and he continued to shoot forward. It seemed that he would not give up before he had grabbed the spiritual medicine!

“Little friend, it is already too late! It would be better for you to leave as quickly as possible. Don’t force this Daoist Priest to go on a killing spree today!” The youth had not taken two steps before a calm and cold voice came from behind him, as if it was directly pressed up behind him, scaring the youth so badly that his soul flew outside of the sky!

The youth's face became deathly pale and he turned his head around. Sure enough, that Daoist Priest was only three meters away from him. He was currently looking and laughing at him!

The deathly pale youth did not continue to speak; he immediately turned around and shot outside the valley, not daring to even turn his head around for a glance. He knew in his heart that there was a wide gap between his strength and the strength of these other two people. Continuing to fight for the spiritual medicines was asking to die; the opponent's willingness to let him escape was already hard to believe!

“Hehe! Daoist brother's Spiritual Fox Steps have become much more powerful than before. It truly has reached perfection!” The elder, seeing that the Daoist Priest had let the youth escape, felt that it was extremely strange; however, he had not made a move to block him, but rather began to compliment the other person.

“It's nothing, it's only a minor accomplishment!” The Daoist Priest said leisurely as he glanced indifferently at the disappearing back of the youth.

Chapter 199: Brother And Sister Chen

“Is Master Li somewhat confused as to why this Daoist Priest let that person leave?” The middle-aged Daoist Priest was silent for a moment, then suddenly opened his mouth and spoke.

“Hehe! I am a little bit. This little boy’s magic tools were pretty good; even I was somewhat tempted when I saw them!” The elder actually spoke very frankly, not attempting to conceal his thoughts.

“Then Master should get rid of this idea as quickly as possible; this person cannot be killed!” the Daoist Priest said with a certain amount of caution and knitted his eyebrows.

When the azure-robed elder heard this, an expression of doubt briefly flitted across his face, but he did not yet open his mouth to ask anything. He knew that since the conversation had already progressed to this point, based on the other person’s personality, a clear explanation would definitely be provided soon after.

As expected, the Daoist Priest stiffly continued, “This person has strong connections to Heavenly Imperial Fortress’s Ma Yunlong; its best to avoid rashly provoking him!”

When the elder heard this, he was moved and couldn’t help but say with surprise, “Do you mean that Ma Yunlong from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress who a century ago was the person who had the most hope of entering the Core Formation stage?”

The Daoist Priest bitterly laughed and sighed, “If it wasn’t that person, who else would it be? I have seen this person a few times. The Dustfall Pearl in that youth’s hand was that person’s famous magic tool; there’s no way I could be wrong! Thus, this youth must be strongly related to Ma Yunlong. It’s best if we don’t touch this youth!”

“Yes, thanks for this Daoist friend’s reminder! Otherwise, I would really have made a big mistake! Sigh, we had better harvest these spiritual medicines as early as possible. We don’t want any other unexpected guests!” The elder immediately suggested, finally having recovered to his normal state from his earlier shock.

The Daoist priest naturally cheerfully agreed; then, the two people cut off a “Purple Monkey Flower”, one from each side, and then immediately parted ways.

Similar scenes were playing out in the few other locations; however, their conflicts far less peaceful, instead creating incredibly intense sparks as they clashed.

To the side of a certain stone room on a mountain ridge on the ring-shaped mountain, four people from two different sects were battling while controlling many kinds of magic tools.

Among these were a male and female, both wearing yellow attire; they were Yellow Maple Valley’s disciples.

The male of about forty years had a scholarly appearance. He held a silver, shining, huge pen and a golden, brilliant book in the

middle of his hand. With a wave of his hand, the silver marks and the sky full of golden light attacked the two opponents until their sweat stuck to their back and their faces had turned green.

Although the pretty, young woman also controlled a blue and yellow pair of flying swords, supporting off to the side, any discerning person could tell just from a glance that her strength was vastly weaker even when compared to that of the two opponents, not to mention when compared with her own partner! She was basically useless. Instead, her extremely powerful partner had to save her a couple of times!

Their opponents, however, were not two people from the same sect.

One of them wore a green mask of light and controlled a flying snake about as wide as a bowl and a swarm of huge wasps. The ugly male ferociously defending himself from the Yellow Maple Valley male's large-scale attack of gold light was actually Zhong Yue from Spirit Beast Mountain, who had exchanged information with Han Li.

The other person was a pretty and gentle male youth completely clothed in azure; most likely, he was a Saber Transformation Dock disciple.

The two red flying daggers fluttering in front of him shot light out in all direction; just from one glance one would know that they were not common magic tools. These magic tools, which were originally attack-type flying daggers, now became two curtains of light about as large as a wagon wheel in front of him, straining to

block the silver marks like a sky full of stars against a sparkling silver talisman.

“Stay your hand, stop fighting, the two of us surrender! The one surnamed Chen, consider yourself vicious, the spiritual grasses within the stone room belong to you!” The Saber Transformation Dock youth could no longer endure, and he finally opened his mouth to give in.

When the ugly Zhong Yue to the side heard this, apart from having a slight expression of unwillingness, it did not actually prevent him from speaking. It could have been considered to be a taciturn understanding of the male youth’s words. He returned the flying snake and swarm of wasps back to his side.

“Heng! How could we let you off so lightly, so that when you say surrender you can surrender!” the weakest female from Yellow Maple Valley said somewhat unwillingly as she lifted up the long hair on her forehead. Earlier, she had been directly ignored, so she had to suppress a stomach full of restlessness; thus, her tone became very malicious.

“What do you want to do, do you really want to stop the killing? I’m afraid you might not have the ability to!” When the Saber Transformation Dock male heard this, he began to screech in aggravation, like he was a girl who had just received a great fright. Thus, the other three people couldn’t help but get goosebumps.

“Of course we won’t, my seventh little sister was only speaking out of anger! You two only need to worry about leaving, Chen will definitely not get in your way!” the middle-aged Yellow Maple

Valley male said, his eyebrows slightly knotted. He immediately glared at the female to prevent her from saying more mean things, and then spoke to Zhong Yue and the others with a peaceful expression.

“Hehe! Brother Chen really is worthy of being called the Chen Clan’s prince; your bearing is much different than those of certain girls. Then we will take our leave!” The Saber Transformation Dock youth suddenly became peaceful again, and his voice had returned to that of a normal male, in an instant seeming like he was a graceful, handsome prince. The great contrast would cause people to be very flabbergasted!

After saying this, the youth and Zhong Yue glanced again at that stone room, unwilling to part with it, then left that place with some heartache, disappearing without a trace behind the rocks of the mountain.

“Big Brother, why didn’t you kill those two people? All we needed was to exert some more effort, and we could have immediately wiped them out!” After watching the two of them leave, the pretty female was finally unable to resist turning her head and asking the middle-aged male this.

“Seventh Little Sister, I’ve discovered that ever since that incident, you have become somewhat extreme! You want to take other people’s lives so easily, but do you know who these two people are? They both come from incredibly well-known and large families; although they are still very far from our Yan, Chen, and other great clans, one cannot easily look down on them. It’s best if we don’t rashly start a feud!”

“In addition, even if we really wanted to kill them, we would more than likely not succeed! You should know that although it seemed as if the power of the golden book and silver pen had pushed those two to an imminent crisis, in reality it was under the premise that they had no intention of running away. If we were really to try to kill them, they aren’t idiots; they would obviously immediately flee. By that time, I would not be able to do anything to them even if my golden book and silver pen were stronger! I would only be suddenly inciting revenge upon my household!”

The Yellow Maple Valley middle-aged male first used a pampering tone to lightly rebuke the young woman, then explained in great detail the reason why he was unwilling to kill them. This caused that female to suddenly be enlightened!

“Oh, right, Seventh Sister! That brat from the Lu Clan, after plotting against you, has never revealed himself anywhere else; it seems as if he really was killed by the person who saved you. If it’s really so, he can consider himself lucky. Otherwise, I would definitely make him feel as if death is better than living to let him know the fear of daring to scheme against our Chen Clan. The person who saved you, however, is worth thinking over! I spent a lot of energy to investigate the disciples from our sect who had been missing for a few days, but in the end I didn’t actually discover anybody who could pose a threat to that brat from the Lu Clan. You must know that although that bastard’s magic power is not worth mentioning, his Azure Flood Dragon Banner is really a pretty good top-grade magic weapon! Since they were able to save you from his grasp, that person must not be too weak; could he be an outsider cultivator who just happened to pass by?” The female’s big brother suddenly switched to a tender and caring tone as he spoke to his “Seventh Sister”.

It turned out that this “Seventh Little Sister” was actually the “Junior Martial Sister Chen” who had become as cold as ice and frost; however, in front of this person who was her older brother, she had evidently recovered a bit of her inherent nature. Thus, when she heard his words, her face immediately blushed and she threw a tantrum, “Bah! Why would you bring up that guy? He saved me, so what! I was left all alone in that desolate area, but he actually took my Foundation Establishment Pill and luckily escaped! Most likely, he is also not some good person!”

Junior Martial Sister Chen’s tone was filled with injustice and hatred!

In reality, what caused her to be so ashamed and indignant was not that, but rather it was because as soon as she thought of this person, she would recall that embarrassing night where her head was not clear and her entire body had felt hot and naked.

And those two beasts had willfully caressed her entire body from head to toe with their callous hands as well as the thick male smell from the other person’s body were even more engraved in her memory.

However, because she was more than a little humiliated and angry, Junior Martial Sister Chen tried her hardest not to think about that incident, instead suppressing them within the deepest corners of her heart. Today, hearing her own big brother bringing it up, she couldn’t help but develop a headache, causing her face to alternate between red and white as she sank into contemplation.

When Junior Martial Sister Chen absentmindedly regained consciousness, she discovered her own big brother staring at her with deep meaning, seemingly smiling without smiling. It was as if all of her secrets had been completely seen through by him! This caused her blushing to become even more apparent!

Junior Martial Sister Chen, feeling incredibly bashful, simply stomped her tiny foot and said, “I’m going to go harvest the medicine!”

Watching the back of his most beloved younger sister, the middle-aged man couldn’t help but smile lightly. He had already had a scheme in mind!

Then, he followed and walked after her.

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In a certain dense forest, a green-clothed young woman was furiously biting her lips, controlling a small, white statue. She was currently embroiled in a difficult battle with a two-headed strange snake. It seemed as if for a period of time they were neck and neck; behind the strange snake was a completely fire-red tree. On its branches grew a number of fist-sized red fruits.

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A line of white-clothed males and females silently walked within a long and narrow underground tunnel; it seemed as if their ranks

numbered roughly fifteen or sixteen people. All of the surviving Masked Moon Sect disciples in the forbidden area were actually all here, and the one at the very front was the fairy-like young woman who had earlier seen Han Li from afar!

Chapter 200: Young Woman And Young Woman

The white-clothed young woman, although she appeared to be very pure, actually wore a solemn expression at this time, and her entire body was shrouded by an odd silver sheen. This caused her to appear even more mysterious!

What surprised people the most was that the white-clothed males and females following her all appeared to be apprehensive. There weren't even any low whispers, and their expressions as they gazed at the young woman's back were that of reverence!

The crafty and unruly woman who had appeared in the desert along with her cultivating companion were in their midst. However, no trace of the arrogant expression on her face could be found; she did not dare to even breathe heavily, just like the other people around her. She appeared to be especially lovable and well behaved!

Suddenly, the young fairy woman at the lead stopped her steps, and the entire procession behind her naturally stopped as well.

A wide opening was not far in front of them, and a deep, green pool appeared; within the center of the pool were a few reef rocks protruding from the surface of the water. On these rocks grew roughly ten Lingzhi mushrooms, which shone like jade and were especially conspicuous.

"Is it here?" the young fairy woman crisply asked without even

turning her head as she gazed at the pool with a great deal of interest. Her voice appeared to be particularly delicate.

“Yes! Martial Ancestor, the top level Jade Crocodile demonic beast is hiding within the pool. The past few times we came to harvest ingredients in the forbidden area, a disciple from our sect was buried within the belly of this beast. However, another person was able to escape and survive!” An older woman flashed out of the flock of Masked Moon Sect female disciples and responded while bowing very respectfully to the young fairy woman.

“Martial Ancestor?” If any of the disciples from the other six sects heard this, perhaps they would be so shocked their jaws would dislocate!

According to the rules of the cultivating world that determined seniority by strength, this young, fairy-like woman could only be addressed in this way if she were one of the Masked Moon Sect’s Core Formation cultivators! And weren’t Foundation Establishment cultivators and above not allowed to enter the forbidden area this time! What was going on? Looking at the appearances of the other Masked Moon Sect’s disciples, who were not amazed by this at all, it seemed like they had known this secret much earlier!

“Okay! Got it, you can withdraw!”

At this time, the young fairy woman pompously gave this instruction; her face revealed a capable expression that did not match with her age.

Then, she spoke again to the people behind her, “Prepare yourselves! In a moment, I will lure the Jade Crocodile out of the water surface, and you will use the “Yin Yang Pulling Magic” combined assault secret technique that you have recently learned, attacking together in pairs. Surely, relying on the killing strength that can defeat Foundation Establishment disciples in one blow, this hunt is definitely not a problem. Then, we can go to the next top level demonic beast’s hideout and continue to clean out these spiritual medicines that others had previously not dared to harvest!”

The young woman was not loud, but her words indicated her full self-confidence. When the male and female disciples heard this, no one revealed any doubtful expressions, instead all answering in agreement.

This young fairy woman then turned around and open her purple red lips. A thumb-sized pink ring slowly spurted out from her mouth. Next, a wind rose; in the turn of an eye, the ring became roughly the size of a forehead and began to emit a low droning cry. It was dazzlingly brilliant and extremely unnatural!

Based on this ring’s manner of appearing, the light it radiated, and its enormous amount of spiritual power, one could determine that it was absolutely a genuine magic treasure.

Could this young woman truly be a Core Establishment cultivator?

In no time, an extremely loud noise first came out from within this hundred meter deep secret cave. Immediately afterwards, numerous low howls, like those of a water buffalo, also came out; those howls were filled with wrath, but presently repeated rumblings of thunder also began to sound out, temporarily strengthening the howls before they immediately weakened. Then, various kinds of loud noises and crackles incessantly came out, finally completely drowning out the howls, which never sounded out again.

After numerous hours, the young fairy woman led the Masked Moon Sect's male and female disciples out from some hidden passageway. The male and female disciples behind her were each incredibly excited, displaying a face of youthfulness.

This was not surprising; opportunities to slaughter a grade one top level demonic beasts were not often available to these Qi Condensation novices. Today, they had not actually expended much energy to kill that extremely mean and ferocious Jade Crocodile; how could they not be excited?

Of course, if it weren't for the young fairy woman using her magic treasure, the ring, to block more than half of the demonic beast's attack, they could not have perfectly ended this conflict without any casualties, so their gazes at the young woman's back were even more respectful!

The young woman's gaze towards the male and female disciples behind her had no trace of care, and she continued to indifferently walk in the front. It was as if killing a first tier top level demonic beast was not something that could faze her at all!

After a short amount of time, the flock of Masked Moon Sect disciples disappeared into the nearby dense forest without a trace.

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In other places just like that, scenes of disciples from various sects killing the demonic beasts to obtain the spiritual medicines continued to play out. Occasionally, conflicts would also occur over these spiritual medicines. Strangely, however, people being killed in these conflicts were actually very few in number. Usually, as long as people who understood they were no match for the opponent retreated, the person with the upper hand would also not use excessive force; instead, they would hurriedly harvest these spiritual medicines and leave quickly for the next location.

With regards to this kind of situation, most people were very clear in their hearts! This was mostly because everyone's remaining time was not much, and opportunities for these bloody battles were better spent going to other locations and seeing if there were any profits. The real time for everyone to kill each other and steal the opponent's spiritual medicines was on the last day, when everyone was returning from their rewarding journey. On that day, there would definitely be blood, and wouldn't be like the previous two days, where one could lightly allow their opponents to escape!

Han Li also knew a little about these things, so he had taken opportunity of these two days where the disciples from various sects were still willing to mutually restrain themselves to furiously hurry from one location to the next. Anytime a medium level and

above demonic beast appeared in his path, he would immediately use a movement technique to evade around it, unwilling to be hindered by them for even a fraction of a second!

One did not know whether Han Li had some stroke of good luck; apart from the first cave he wanted to harvest medicine from, where he had encountered that poisonous bug demonic beast, the huge centipede, no guardian demonic beasts appeared in any of the next four locations. Thus, he easily harvested the spiritual medicines without expending even a tiny amount of excess energy, causing Han Li to be wild with joy! If the following events were to proceed as smoothly as before, harvesting enough spiritual medicines was not a problem at all!

At this time, the third day in the forbidden area was almost over!

Han Li was currently leaping from treetop to treetop at lightning speed without stopping; along the way, he had encountered two low level ape demonic beasts, who disintegrated with a couple waves of his hand, having been completely broken apart.

Now, Han Li was rushing towards his last destination of the day, a small stone temple near the peak of the mountain. Reportedly, there was more than one type of spiritual medicine and strange herbs growing in that location; the Sky Spirit Fruit that he needed the most was also in there.

However, although the time for the Sky Spirit Fruit to ripen had yet to come, the few other kinds were all ripe for the picking! Thus, Han Li guessed that there would definitely be demonic beasts guarding them, and there was also a possibility that

disciples from other sects could have gotten there earlier.

However, Han Li did not care; he even looked forward to someone getting there before he did; that way, they could help him clean up his path, saving him from having to waste a few extra movements. In any case, this person would definitely not be interested in spiritual medicines that were not yet ripe!

Right as Han Li was thinking all of these positive thoughts, the stone temple's shadow could finally be seen off in the distance. It indeed could not be considered big!

But before Han Li could get close to that place, the sound of a fierce battle had already drifted over.

Han Li's heart became happy; it seemed as if there truly was someone who would help him open up his path. Thus, his figure immediately contorted, and after a few flashes, he silently drew closer to the stone temple.

In the empty space in front of the stone temple, there actually was not the scene of a wild male fighting a demonic beast that Han Li had expected to see in his heart. Instead, it was a black-clothed, barefoot, and square-faced man controlling a huge silver sword that was pressuring a slender, green-clothed woman to the point that she could not breathe easily.

This woman's only defensive method was a silk handkerchief that shone with a yellow light; however, its surface was cloudy and pale. She had been completely suppressed by the silver sword to a

disadvantage, and could only bitterly endure.

Off to the side, the corpse of a huge red wolf and a white young eagle lay, having been split into two. The fresh blood that flowed from their bodies covered the ground, and the piercing smell of gore filled the area. It seemed as if they had died not too long ago.

Seeing all of this, Han Li's jaw couldn't help but silently drop wide open; it wasn't because those two's battle had shocked him, but rather because that green-clothed young woman was actually the easily embarrassed young woman who had sold him that Golden Sincerity Brush. This caused Han Li to be completely astonished!

This was because Han Li had already discovered that the young woman's cultivation base was extremely shallow when the disciples from the various sects had gathered together outside of the forbidden area; it was merely at the tenth layer. Thus, he expected that this woman, after entering the forbidden area, had either already passed away long ago, or she should have been quietly hiding in some location!

But today, he had seen her use a top-grade magic tool to fight to the death with a not to be trifled with disciple from the Giant Sword Sect in the central area of the ring-shaped mountain. How could this not cause Han Li to feel incredibly shocked!

“Little girl! It's not too late to quit and leave. You should know that I was always being lenient with you. But I trust that someone who doesn't want to kill a female doesn't necessarily mean they won't kill a female! If you continue to nag me, you and that white

eagle will share the same end!” the barefoot man said filled with killing intent; his expression was chilly, and he was somewhat annoyed at this point.

One should know that he had been annoyed by this young woman from Spirit Beast Mountain who had appeared from Heaven’s knows where for more than half an hour. His last shred of patience had long since been depleted. If the opponent continued to be unable to tell good from bad, he might actually kill a delicate flower!

The young woman’s face was deathly pale. However, after gritting her teeth, she said extremely stubbornly, “If you aren’t willing to let me have the few Fierce Yang Blossoms inside, I won’t leave even if I die!”

Chapter 201: Martial Idiot

When the barefoot man heard this, his heart filled with vigorous rage! This woman already had difficulty protecting her own life, yet she still continued to repeatedly raise her baseline!

“Good! Good! Good!”

Thus, he laughed, annoyed, and said three “Good’s”..

“Then today you can die here!”

Having said this, he pointed the huge silver sword out, and the huge sword immediately shot out brilliantly, releasing an extremely dazzling sword tip. Next, a relentless pressure shot out ruthlessly towards the young woman’s forehead.

When the young woman saw this, she gritted her teeth and hurriedly commanded the silk handkerchief to become a yellow plate roughly the size of a wheel to directly block it.

With a “rip”, the this top-grade magic tool that had been completely spent had actually been cut into pieces by the full-force huge silver sword, floating everywhere in the air. The silver sword brilliantly flashed, and under the control of the big man, it unhesitatingly continued to stab at the bitterly smiling young woman.

With a clear “dong” sound, when the silver sword was ten meters

away from the young woman's forehead, it was blocked by a golden flying dagger that came shooting over from the side. Then, it danced in the air as a ball of golden light above the young woman; it would not allow the silver sword to drop even an inch.

“Who is it? Get out here!” The barefoot man's face fell, and he made a gesture, retrieving the silver sword. Then, his eyes swept like lightning towards the side and tenaciously stared at a huge mountain rock, unwilling to let it go. This was because he had seen very clearly that the gold blade had flown out from there.

“Hehe! The weather today is pretty good! Why would everybody fight and kill each other? It would be much better if we all sat down and had a nice, pleasant conversation!” A figure flashed out from behind the rock, and an average-appearing yellow-robed youth spun out. This person rubbed his head, then raised his head to look at the sky and spoke this with a laugh.

However, this youth's face was filled with helplessness! It was precisely the Han Li who, seeing that the young woman's life was in danger, had no choice but to make a move and saved the green-clothed young woman.

Han Li could only look at the sky and be speechless; he had actually made a move without thinking more about it upon seeing the young woman's gloomy countenance! This was truly breaking one of his rules to always play it safe. He had gotten himself into a troublesome situation for no reason; truly, beautiful women brought disaster!

However, Han Li also knew that this mostly was because the

impression that woman had left on him was truly too deep. He was also unable to watch this person of whom he had a very favorable impression die right in front of his eyes and act indifferent! It seemed like his heart could not actually be considered hard; he really wasn't a vicious, merciless, and ambitious character who wouldn't recognize his own family!

Han Li bitterly laughed and let his imagination run wild for a while.

However, he had already stirred up the trouble and could only strengthen his spirit and cope with it for a moment. Luckily, after experiencing the battles with the woman with many treasures and Feng Yue, Han Li had a bit more confidence in contending against these elite disciples. Thus, he was not panicking in his heart and had grabbed a few things in his hand much earlier.

"It's you?" The green-clothed young woman had now finally seen Han Li's face clearly and couldn't help but cover up her almond-shaped lips and cry out in surprise. She revealed an expression of disbelief.

Seeing that the young woman had only just recognized who her savior was and appeared to be quite dazed, Han Li couldn't help but be in a good mood and think it was funny!

However, on the surface he still only gently nodded at the young woman, then turned around and continued to say to the barefooted man, "How does this brother look upon my suggestion? It would be better if your esteemed self would let this woman go, and then you can go on your Closed Sun Path while we can go our

Lonely Wood Bridge. Everyone can mind their own business, and thus wouldn't the peace not be disturbed!"

Han Li was still holding onto the thought that if he could avoid striking, he would avoid striking, and so he spoke the aforementioned words! In addition, starting a fiery battle with an "expert" for no reason could, perhaps, also force him to take measure to preserve his own life; it truly would not be a sensible decision!

But Han Li had never expected that the barefooted man in front of him would actually turn a blind eye to his words, instead staring with great interest at the Gold Beetle Swarm Mother Blade. It was as if to him, this golden blade interested him much more than Han Li himself.

This kind of action from the opponent caused Han Li to become somewhat quietly resentful! He strongly endured the annoyance in his heart and was thinking of saying something when suddenly the man opened his mouth. This opening of his mouth caused Han Li to stare blankly.

"The golden blade in your hand should be part of the same set as the one floating in the air, right? Since it can block my silver sword's attack without being damaged for a while, it should be a top-grade magic tool! Did I guess correctly?" The Giant Sword Sect's barefooted male casually opened his mouth and asked with a bright shine in his eyes. His vigor suddenly rose in an extremely shocking manner!

Han Li blinked a few times and was somewhat confused; he

didn't know what the opponent's intentions were! However, he still thoughtlessly spoke and replied, "You are correct, they really are a top-grade magic tool. Furthermore....."

"Enough! Knowing this is enough. You can attack! If you can beat me, I will not only spare this woman's life, but even the spiritual medicines inside of the stone room will all belong to you two!" This person didn't even wait for Han Li to finish talking before immediately interrupting what he was going to say. His face was filled with fanaticism, and he spoke the words that caused Han Li to be dumbstruck.

This person was actually a "Martial Idiot" in the world of cultivators! At this time, Han Li suddenly realized this point, and he suddenly felt full of gloom, unable to speak even a sentence!

(TL: Martial idiot means someone who only lives to fight.)

"On guard!"

The big man did not wait for Han Li to reply and actually did not even release a barrier, instead immediately controlling the silver sword and turning from the young woman's direction towards Han Li, aggressively pouncing over.

After knowing how things stood with the opponent, Han Li understood that saying anything else would be wasting his time; thus, he immediately shook the mother blade in his hand, and the other seven blades flew out from his storage pouch. They became seven streaks of golden tips that flew forward to meet the

opponent's huge, silver sword without any sign of weakness.

However, Han Li did not actually pull out a defensive talisman to increase his own protective barrier.

This was because, after seeing the silver sword break through the young woman's silk handkerchief, Han Li was very clear in his heart that this silver sword's strength was truly too shocking. Under one stab from it, regular barriers would break instantly and the person would be killed, not even able to withstand one attack. Thus, it would be better to not add on defensive techniques; in this way he could rely on his movement technique's unpredictability to deal with the opponent's strange attacks!

As Han Li was contemplating this, apart from the gold blade guarding near the young woman, the other seven blades had already become entangled with the huge silver sword. It was as if seven golden snakes and a huge python were incessantly rolling around and tearing into one another; both did not show any weaknesses!

Chapter 202: Silence

Just as Han Li ordered the seven children blades to intercept the silver sword, he soon immediately felt his opponent's strength.

With only this single huge sword magic tool, the large man immediately and unwaveringly pushed down on all of the golden blades. The seven golden streaks formed a defensive golden net. Under the tyrannical collision against the huge silver sword, the golden blades were completely defeated and weren't even able to suppress it in the slightest. Instead, the golden blades radiance rapidly grew dim from the silver sword streak's strike; a clear sign that the golden blades were breaking down. It seemed to be only a matter of time before they would be destroyed much like the young woman's handkerchief.

However, Han Li had yet to experience the might of the silver sword and was surprised. In accordance to might, his "Gold Beetle Swarm Blades" were only common trash among top-grade magic tools. Being no match against the silver sword was within expectations and nothing to make a fuss over. As a result, Han Li pointed his finger, wanting two of the golden blades in the struggle to shoot toward the large man. He wanted to first test the opponent's defensive methods. Besides, he wanted to see whether this was an opportunity he could exploit! After all, if someone were dead, there there would be no point in how strong someone's magic tools were.

Two of the golden streaks Han Li was controlling were just about to turn, wanting to fly toward the man's legs. Unexpectedly, the opponent's huge sword suddenly resonated with silver light, and with the sword hilt at the center, it rapidly whirled. In an instant it

turned into a huge silver disk and released countless threads of attractive force from its center, causing the nearby golden blades to become incapable of moving in the slightest as if they were weighed down by a thousand kilograms. The two blades wanting to leave naturally weren't able to luckily escape.

These scene caused Han Li to be stunned from alarm. As soon as he regained his senses, he hastily looked toward the large man. As expected, the opponent was using a strange magic technique. His hands were dancing with the wind as if he were gesturing some sort of circles.

Han Li didn't give it much thought and promptly patted his storage pouch. A flying blue dagger and a gold alms bowl flew out. The two items didn't stop at Han Li's side and shot straight toward the large man.

Although the hands of the barefoot man from the Giant Sword Sect were not idle, Han Li's actions were clear. He sneered for a moment. Then he suddenly changed the incantation gestures in his hands and held his bare hand against the flying dagger and alms bow, pointing at the two objects from a distance.

Han Li immediately felt the result. He lost his connection to the two magic tools that were originally in their control. Woosh. Woosh. The two magic tools actually flew over twenty meters away and were sucked in by the floating huge sword's silver vortex.

Pu. Pu. Just as the two high-grade magic tools were about to enter the huge silver sword's rapid vortex, they were unable to

endure for that short moment and burst into fragments like fireworks. Those sparking magic tool fragments made an exceptionally beautiful meteor shower.

Han Li's mouth was currently dry. He completely did not expect the opponent's cultivation and silver sword to be this great. Not only were his "Golden Beetle Swarm Blades" trapped, his two high-grade magic tools were disposed of, thoroughly destroyed without the slightest of effect. This truly caused him to become apprehensive.

Bang! The sound of the explosion greatly frightened Han Li. His complexion rapidly paled as he looked over to the source of the sound. As expected, the original seven of the golden swarm blades turned to six with a beautiful golden rain of sparks appearing from the center of the silver vortex. Under the large man's control, the silver vortex was actually starting to destroy and absorb the golden blades.

When it had only started to destroy high-grade magic tools, Han Li would only be apprehensive. But now that the golden blades started to disappear, Han Li truly felt some heartache. These were top-grade magic tools! Furthermore, because they were a complementary set, each loss would significantly reduce its power.

With his extreme heartache, Han Li no longer hesitated and flipped his right hand, taking out the small mirror from the girl with many treasures. Han Li hurriedly poured spiritual power into the mirror and then pointed it to the sky, immediately spouting out a brilliant azure mist from the mirror. The mist immediately returned the huge silver sword vortex to its original appearance. It

trapped the silver sword and the remaining golden blades in the azure light, causing them to become completely motionless in midair.

The barefooted man's completely complacent expression immediately disappeared without a trace when he saw Han Li's small mirror. With a pale expression, he loudly cried out, "The Azure Stasis Mirror! How did you acquire this item. Isn't that the life-saving magic tool of the Masked Moon Sect's Shuang Jiao? Could it be that you killed her?"

After the large man said this, he looked at Han Li with an incredulous gaze as if he had done some sort of treasonous action in defiance of the natural order. This caused Han Li to feel a moment of unrest!

From the opponent's tone of voice, it seemed as if this top-grade magic tool was able to cause him a great amount of inconvenience. Han Li could not help but stop his hand for the time being, wanting to hear what the opponent had to say.

"What's the idea? I didn't kill her, I received it from the one who killed her, from the hands of that guy called Feng Yue. Could it be that there's something strange?" Han Li wrinkled his brow, saying this with an unsightly expression.

"Hehe, these words of your esteemed self, would the Martial Ancestor of Masking Moon's Shuang Jiao believe them? Will a Core Formation Expert or a Masking Moon Sect Elder believe the mere trifling words of a Qi Condensation disciple?" The large barefooted man said with a sneer, coldly laughing several times.

Han Li's heart suddenly sunk. He knew that if what he had said was true, then he would have no chance to explain himself! He hadn't the slightest evidence to exonerate himself and prevent himself from dying. Instead, he had that malicious woman's magic tool in his possession. As it was, that Masked Moon Sect Elder would most likely not let a 'murderer' like him get away.

"This is far too troublesome!" When he thought that a Core Formation expert would take note of his small life, not only did Han Li's mouth grow painfully bitter and dry, but he also felt gloomy to the point of wanting to spit out blood.

With this said, he was being treated extremely unjustly! Not only did he not kill her, but he also killed Feng Yue, which could be considered revenge on her behalf! But now the result was a Core Formation expert pursuing him while he had no method to prove himself innocent!

After all, how could a person who could kill a Qi Condensation disciple with her fingers like it was no different from squashing an ant ever possibly listen to him! His own elders of Yellow Maple Valley would mostly likely not act on behalf of a nobody such as him and offend an elder of the Masked Moon Sect!

The more Han Li thought, the more he felt that what his future held was anything but good. Could it be that after he left the forbidden area, he would have to travel far away and flee death by living with a concealed identity in another country? Han Li truly did not want to take that path!

The large man clearly saw Han Li's gloomy expression and could not help but laugh heartily, rejoicing in his misfortune.

As the barefooted man's laughs grew louder, Han Li's expression grew increasingly darker! A timid voice came from the side.

"Let's all keep it a secret and not tell anyone else. Is that fine?"

The young green clothed woman, who listened clearly from the side, interrupting with some hesitation.

"Keep it a secret?"

Han Li and the large man were startled, unable to keep their emotions in check. Then they looked at each other with a strange expression and suddenly shut their mouth, keeping silent.

The words that the young woman had wanted to say caused the two who were baffled to immediately swallow in fear. With opened pupils, their eyes could only spin around incessantly; they didn't dare to speak.

During the silence, Han LI suddenly put his hands behind his back and slowly paced back and forth nearby. Meanwhile, the large man was rigidly staring at Han Li's every movement with an extremely solemn appearance.

In this peacefulness that caused people's heartbeat to slowly accelerate, after the time it took to make a cup of tea, the large

man with a solemn expression opened his mouth and broke the silence.

“I truly did not think of that. Us two were actually reminded by a young girl! It seems the phrase ‘the actors were confused but the onlooker saw clearly’ is truly not false! Just now, your distinguished self intended to kill me in order to silence me!”

“You’re not wrong. If there was a second path, I definitely wouldn’t have the heart to kill this brother! Brother’s sword controlling technique could be said to be marvelous beyond compare! This one truly admires it!” Han Li sighed, halting his steps nearby and helplessly saying as he faced the large man.

“It seems that even with a death oath, your esteemed self will not be convinced!” After a short moment, the large man said this overbearingly with an encompassing radiance shining from his eyes.

“You’re not wrong. I only believe that dead men can keep secrets!” Han Li’s expression sunk as he replied with a bone-chilling tone.

“Good, since this is the case, we don’t need to speak rubbish. Only one of us will leave here alive!” the barefooted man heroically said with raised eyebrows.

“Only one of us will live? That’s wrong. It should be said that your esteemed self’s death is certain!” After Han Li heard the large man’s words, he strangely smiled and lightly said this as he shook

his head.

“Nonsense. Do you believe that because you’ve trapped my Silversheen Sword for the time being that your victory is certain!? I have many methods you have yet to experience!” The large man grew furious as he heard Han Li’s words, and he immediately yelled in response. In addition, he raised his arm, and silver light suddenly sparkled from his hand. A sword streak similar to the silver sword unexpectedly appeared in midair.

“Your esteemed self did not yet take note of this. The distance between us is already within thirty meters!” Han Li was looking at the large man with a peculiar expression and sighed. Soon after, his figure became indistinct and completely disappeared into the air.

“So long as I am within thirty meters of someone and no defensive technique are used, that person’s life or death is basically mine to decide!” Han Li’s voice became a hollow echo. Suddenly, he appeared pressed up behind the fear-stricken large man. He said the last word of his sentence as he appeared.

“And now you are already dead!” Han Li softly muttered this as he slowly withdrew the thread he had just waved.

The large man motionlessly looked forward with a lifeless expression. A thin red line suddenly appeared on his neck. His head was still for a moment before smoothly rolling off his neck, truly as dead as dead can be.

Han Li then turned his body and looked at the two-part corpse. A trace of pity flashed on his face. This large man's strength was no less than that of Feng Yue. However, he was careless and actually let Han Li approach to such a close distance. His death could not be regarded as unjust!

“Do you also want to kill and silence me?”

Han Li suddenly heard these feeble words, laced with suspicious vigilance and restless fear.

Chapter 203: Worry-Free Needle And Forgetful Dust Pill

Han Li began to bitterly laugh. Although he had gotten rid of the fellow from the Giant Sword Sect, he still had to deal with the largest problem at hand!

The green-clothed young woman's slim and frail body, her deathly pale and thin face, and the panic in her eyes were all completely and distinctly reflected in his eyes the moment that Han Li slightly shifted his eyes and swept the scene. It seemed as if the shock she had received was truly not small.

He did not respond to the young woman's inquiry, instead bending over and picking up the storage pouch on the big man's corpse. Then, he flicked the tip of his finger, and a small fireball hit the corpse, turning it into ash in a brief moment. Afterwards, he used the Azure Stasis Mirror to withdraw the azure light binding the silver sword and the gold blades together, then released the huge sword and the golden blades, storing them in his storage pouch.

It was only at this time that Han Li turned around and walked towards the young woman expressionlessly.

When the young woman saw that Han Li truly was getting closer to her, her already deathly pale face became even more pale without a trace of blood. She could not help but fearfully shrink back a few steps.

“What do you want to do? If you come over, I won’t be polite anymore!” The green-clothed young woman finally mustered up her courage and reached her hand into her storage pouch, pulling out a small black sword and pointing it at the Han Li in front of her. However, Han Li had determined in a glance that this sword was only a trash mid-grade magic tool. It seemed like that yellow silk handkerchief was that woman’s only top-grade magic tool!

“Is this how this young lady treats the great kindness of being saved?” Han Li suddenly rubbed his nose and asked as he smiled.

“The great kindness of being saved?” The young woman stared blankly for a moment, somewhat confused by Han Li’s drastic change in appearance from before to now. It seemed as if she had not yet recovered from it.

“This young lady is really an eminent person with a short memory! If I hadn’t made a move back then and saved this young woman from that person’s sword, why would I want to make any kind of shady business like silencing you!” Han Li said, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

“Oh..... I’m really sorry, I..... I was scared and I forgot!” The young woman was suddenly enlightened and remembered this matter, so she hurriedly explained as her face flushed, stuttering in a bewildered manner. If one saw it, one would feel pity.

“It’s not much! However, it is somewhat inconceivable that we would actually meet here after having the pleasure of having met once at the Great South Valley!” Han Li waved his hand and said cordially. He didn’t know why, but whenever he saw this woman’s

bashful appearance, Han Li felt incredibly intimate, as if he were with his own younger sister from his family.

“My name is Han Li. What is this young lady called?” Han Li opened his mouth and asked very carelessly.

“I..... I’m called Han Yunzhi,” the young woman said after a brief moment of hesitation, her face scarlet. She felt incredibly bashful after voluntarily speaking her name in front of this young man.

(TL: Her surname (菡), meaning lotus blossom, and Han Li’s (韩) are different.)

“Han Yunzhi? A very good name, it fits this young lady!” Han Li lightly laughed, repeating the young woman’s name.

“Really!” The red color on Han Yunzhi’s face rose again.

“However, why did young lady Han enter the Spirit Beast Mountain and come to attend the Trial by Blood and Fire?” Han Li asked, somewhat curious.

“This.....” Han Yunzhi’s face displayed a moment of difficulty. She hesitated and chose not to say it.

“Hehe! Since it’s somewhat difficult to answer, you don’t need to tell me. I was only asking thoughtlessly!” Han Li added in empathy, causing Han Yunzhi to feel very grateful.

“Right, we had better enter the stone room and gather the spiritual medicines, lest a long night is fraught with dreams and other people arrive here!” Han Li suddenly said after carelessly conversing with the young woman for a while.

(TL: “A long night fraught with dreams” means a long delay might lead to more hitches.)

Han Yunzhi nodded repeatedly when she heard this, but afterwards she said again, somewhat abashedly:

“Big brother Han, could you let me have those few Fierce Sun Blossoms? I only want those flowers; I won’t ask for anything else more!”

“Of course it’s not a problem; even if young lady Han had not said it, I was already planning on doing it this way!” Han Li replied after hearing this, lightly laughing.

“Many thanks, Big Brother Han!” When the young woman heard this, she immediately expressed her thanks repeatedly, her face revealing a joyful expression. She felt even more grateful towards Han Li.

“Since it’s like this, why doesn’t young lady Han go gather the Fierce Sun Blossoms first! Don’t let me accidentally take them away!” Han Li recommended calmly, laughing once.

“Okay then!” Hearing this, the young woman felt that it was somewhat reasonable and lowered her head, paying her respects to Han Li. Then, she turned around to walk towards the stone room.

But when the young woman had just turned around, she suddenly heard Han Li sigh. Then, she felt a sharp pain in the back of her head and her vision went black, falling unconscious onto the ground. However, when she was a few feet from the ground, she was stopped by being hugged from behind.

It turned out that Han Li had taken advantage of the moment the young woman had turned around to suddenly move himself behind Han Yunzhi and gently knock her out with one blow. He then used his two hands to hold her soft, jade-like body.

Han Li, holding up the young woman's curves and smelling the beautiful and serene smell of the young woman's body, was shaken in his state of mind! He couldn't help but to lower his head and kiss the young woman's fragrant cheek. However, he immediately regained his senses and bit the tip of his tongue, immediately becoming much more sober. Looking at the young woman's beautiful appearance, he began to bitterly laugh incessantly.

He first gently laid the young woman against a wall of the stone room, and then in a flash he entered the room. After a brief moment, when he had cleaned out all of the spiritual medicines inside of the room, he walked out again. He then picked up the young woman again, and his figure swayed a bit before disappearing in an outcrop of mountainous rocks to the side.

Inside a naturally-formed stone cave near the peak of the ring-shaped mountain, Han Li laid the young woman flat on the ground. Then, he sat cross-legged to the side, closed his eyes, and began to recover.

Han Li finally opened his eyes. A mysterious light flickered in them, and he displayed his incredibly fast movement technique. He finally was able to recover some energy. It was only now that he retrieved a palm-sized, delicate silver box from his storage pouch.

Han Li gazed at this silver box and seemed to be somewhat entranced.

After a while, he silently opened the lid to the box, revealing a neatly arranged row of silver needles inside! They were exactly the acupuncture items that he had often used before at the Seven Mysteries Sect.

Han Li lifted his hand and gently caressed the silver needles of all sizes. The figures of Doctor Mo, Li Feiyu, etc. couldn't help but be vivid in his mind; it was as if his life in God Hand Valley was something that transpired only yesterday. He couldn't help but sigh with much sorrow!

After a brief mental journey, Han Li's train of thought finally flew back to him. He settled his mind, and then used two fingers to deftly draw out a long and thin silver needle in a very practiced motion. The needle appeared between his fingers.

Then, Han Li looked at the young woman and then at the needle in his hand; a helpless expression appeared between his eyebrows.

“Young Lady Han, if it wasn't for me being eased by this needle technique, which can eliminate a person's short-term memory, I

really wouldn't know how I would deal with my secret being revealed! Although I believe that you would sincerely try to keep my secret for me, during this time too many accidents will occur. Perhaps you would unintentionally leak it out, or other people would use secret techniques to dig out this matter without you knowing. I have no choice but to protect against this!" Han Li murmured to himself.

Immediately, he brought out a red porcelain bottle and poured out a strong-smelling fiery red medicinal pill from it. He then unhesitatingly stuffed it into the young woman's mouth.

TL: (๖๖)

"Luckily I also brought the Forgetful Dust Pill that I had carelessly concocted before with me; this way, I can fully display my Worry-free Needle Technique without having to worry about the future. Although it is still slightly dangerous, there shouldn't be any big problems anymore; you will only forget the things that have happened in this half day. I really didn't expect that the needle technique I had learned from Doctor Mo's relics could actually be used today in the cultivating world," Han Li said with affection as he touched the young woman's beautiful hair.

After a few hours, Han Li walked out of the cave, his face deathly pale. He hastily hid in a nearby large tree, and then attentively watched the circumstances at the tunnel entrance.

After a quarter of an hour, Han Yunzhi walked out with a vacant expression, holding a few Fierce Sun Blossoms in her hand. She peered around at the cave entrance a few times, a hand on her forehead; her eyes slowly revealed a strange expression.

Suddenly, it seemed as if she had thought of something important; she hurriedly placed the Fierce Sun Blossoms inside of her storage pouch, and she hurriedly left that area, shooting down the mountain.

Not long after she left, Han Li leaped down from the tree. After gazing at the direction the young woman had disappeared to, he let out a long sigh, then slowly headed towards a dense forest on the other side.

The third day in the forbidden area had finally ended; the fourth day's arrival, to Han Li, went much less smoothly than the day before.

If it wasn't encountering and being chased by other strong demonic beasts, it was that his information had mistakes; the locations where spiritual medicines grew didn't actually contain the ones that Han Li needed. As for the demonic beasts guarding the spiritual medicines, their numbers also abruptly increased; in just half a day, Han Li had killed three medium level and two high level demonic beasts in immediate succession. Regardless of whether it was his magic power or his physical energy, Han Li was unable to endure the exertion!

Now, Han Li stood below a huge cliff, assessing his harvests. Although the quantities of the three spiritual medicines had not completely reached his expected goal, they were just barely enough. Even if he were to leave the forbidden area now, it was not something that he could not accept.

In addition, the information from the Yellow Maple Valley clearly indicated that there were no more locations where spiritual medicines were yet to ripen. The remaining locations were all from the information that he had exchanged with Zhong Yue; there were actually a few more!

However, previously Han Li was always afraid that the other person's intelligence was inaccurate, leading him on a wild goose chase and wasting his time. But when Han Li skimmed through this externally-obtained information again, he immediately discovered that there was another location not too far from his current position that concealed and grew many spiritual medicines.

That place not only had spiritual medicines that had yet to ripen; there was even supposed to be many ripe spiritual medicines. This caused Han Li to be somewhat tempted. According to his speculations, if the ripe spiritual medicines there hadn't already been taken by Zhong Yue, they still should have been taken first by other people. However, the yet-to-ripen spiritual medicines should still be there!

Since it was still early and he did not have a predetermined destination, it wouldn't be a bad thing for him to run there and take a look. Even if the information was incorrect, he would not have any losses!

Having reached this intention, Han Li could no longer sit still; after resting for a brief moment, he leaped up to depart.

Chapter 204: The Stone Temple And The Underground Passageway

The place that Han Li intended to go to was located within some basin on the ring-shaped mountain; it was surrounded by large, strangely-shaped rocks that shielded it from the elements. Square in the middle of this basin was an ancient, huge azure stone temple. Although the stone temple was huge, the door to the temple was pitifully small; it could only allow two people to enter in side by side. This gave Han Li, who was standing on top of the rocks and gazing at it, an extremely strange feeling of discordance.

Han Li knitted his eyebrows and jumped off the rocks; then, he leisurely walked near the temple door, raising his head to look at this stone temple.

As he looked at it, the suspicion on his face became even more evident.

He didn't know if it was an illusion, but he always felt that on this stone temple's surface, pale, azure light would occasionally flow; however, when he wanted to take a careful, close look at it, he was unable to see any difference. After doing this a few time, he began to quietly whisper to himself. Could people really have set some kind of magic technique here?

Han Li lowered his head, scanning the ground around him; he was unable to find any traces of people arriving before him, causing him to squint his eyes.

“There’s definitely something odd! Although this basin is somewhat remote, with this huge temple here, there’s no way that other people haven’t discovered it. Even more so, my own information was given to me by that guy Feng Yue; how could he not have arrived at this place before!” In a moment, Han Li’s heart had already run through numerous different ideas; he subconsciously felt that something was wrong.

But he was also somewhat unwilling to leave this place just like that.

Thus, he retreated a few steps, feeling around inside his storage pouch; a golden blade appeared in his hand, and he flung it into the air. It became a streak of golden light, fiercely striking a random azure stone on top of the temple door. With a “Puchi”, the azure stone flooded with azure light, safe and sound, while the golden blade flipped a few times in the air, having been reflected tens of meters away.

Han Li shook his head and turned around, about to leave this place.

“The main goal is to avoid pointless dangers and walk out of the forbidden area alive; this stone temple is so strange, it’s best if I don’t go in there,” Han Li thought, his expression unchanging.

But Han Li had just taken two steps when the color of his face dramatically changed; his figure flashed, and he disappeared into the air. Then, Han Li’s figure appeared again inside of the temple door, but it immediately disappeared again into the stone temple.

At this time, a huge flock of Masked Moon Sect disciples suddenly appeared on some of the rocks of the basin to the side; the leader was the seemingly young fairy woman, who was actually a Martial Ancestor of the Masked Moon Sect.

At this moment, the young woman gazed at the temple door where Han Li had disappeared with a trace of suspicion. She had felt that there was someone in this place, but now she saw that there was not a single person in sight. Could her instincts have been wrong?

The young woman stood still, unwilling to believe any falsehoods. She gently closed her eyes and released her tremendous divine sense all at once. In the end, other than their group of people, she did not sense that there were any other cultivators nearby the basin area. However, when her divine sense swept over the stone temple, it was repelled outside by some kind of strength, causing the young woman to be shocked. However, she immediately began to rejoice, a trace of laughter hanging on her face.

Upon first glance, she had already discovered that this stone temple had already had a restrictive technique cast on it by someone; this did not surprise her. Because the ten or so demonic beasts they had swept aside all had a restrictive technique cast on their secret acupuncture points, this could not amount to much! However, the restrictive technique here could not be penetrated even by her divine sense. This was the first time she had encountered such a situation; the superficial restrictive techniques from before simply could not compare!

In a moment of excitement, the young fairy woman did not want to pursue the matter from before anymore. She trusted that even if there really were one or two disciples from other sects nearby peeping, they would definitely not be willing to create a disturbance with so many people from the Masked Moon Sect! Thus, she took the lead to walk towards the stone temple.

Han Li, at this time, was standing in the large lobby of the stone temple, so anxious that he was spinning around frantically in circles!

He had just been about to leave! Thus, he had first let out his divine sense to assess the situations in his surroundings and prepare to leave.

However, he had never expected that just as he had released his divine sense, he would immediately sensed a huge group of cultivators so close to him. He was so surprised that all of the blood in his body almost congealed, and so he flashed into the stone temple without thinking. Regardless of which of the other six sects these people outside were from, if they saw him here, one would not need to think too much to know what his fate would be.

In reality, if it weren't for his energy expenditures being too high in these past two days, he completely could have used his extremely speedy movement techniques and unabashedly shake off these cultivators from his sleeve and leave. Unfortunately, based on his current condition, this kind of movement technique could not be used many more times; even if he wanted to run, he wouldn't be able to run very far.

Today he was temporarily safe, hiding inside the stone temple! However, he also had been blocked in by that group of cultivators, with no way of leaving anymore.

Actually, this stone temple's construction was too simple! After entering the temple door and walking through a serpentine, winding hallway, an empty, large lobby appeared in front of his eyes. The entire hollow, large lobby actually did not have even a single place for him to hide. Upon looking at the attitude of the flock of people outside, they definitely came for this stone temple. Wishing for those people not to come inside was purely a vain attempt!

In actuality, to say that there definitely was no place for him to go was not entirely true.

In front of Han Li's eyes, in the center of the large lobby, was a black tunnel surrounded by jade railings. The tunnel entrance had a row of stairs, directly slanting into the ground from the entrance. It was also incessantly blowing out warm, humid air; it was truly difficult to imagine where this tunnel would lead one to.

However, Han Li could also guess without thinking that the place this tunnel led to would definitely not be a nice place; it would definitely be extremely ruthless, which was why he had been hesitant to enter. However, there truly were no other places for him to hide in this large temple! This caused the cold sweat on Han Li's forehead to gush out all at once with a "shua".

And at this time, the sound of chaotic footsteps came floating over from the temple entrance; it seemed that group of cultivators had already entered the stone temple and would enter this lobby in the time it takes to roll one's eye.

Seeing this, Han Li seeing this, bitterly sighed in his heart; then, gritting his teeth, he lightly jumped over the railings and slipped into the tunnel.

After entering the tunnel, Han Li's surroundings were pitch black. He used his hand to reach into his storage pouch and retrieve the Moonlight Stone, and only then did his surroundings light up.

The entire tunnel could not be considered to be large. It was entirely built out of azure stone and could allow one person to barely pass through it. Han Li touched the stone wall in passing; it was somewhat damp and slippery.

He did not dare to tarry at all, fearful that the people behind him would catch up to him. Thus, he walked downwards carefully.

After following the stone steps underneath his feet one by one for a few hundred steps, the originally narrow tunnel slowly began to widen, and it could already fit two people side-by-side with no issues. However, the humid wind blowing from in front of him became increasingly hot, causing Han Li to sweat profusely; he had long been drenched with sweat from head to toe.

After walking down close to another hundred steps, Han Li

estimated he was already roughly a hundred or more steps below the earth's surface. The azure tunnel finally disappeared. When he walked out of the tunnel's entrance, what appeared before his eyes was actually a strange swampy world.

This underground world was only three hundred meters or so high, but its circumference reached the length of a few kilometers; with a glance, sludge emitting black water bubbles was everywhere. That hot, humid wind was being generated in the air above the swamp, speedily flowing through the tunnel behind Han Li; then, it would bring back in more clean air from outside the tunnel, thus actually forming an equilibrium of flow rate.

All around the swamp were these tall, large mounds of black dirt; at the other end of the swamp grew a few tens of differently colored strange spiritual herbs. The few kinds of spiritual medicines that Han Li required were also in this group, and their quantities were truly not low either.

However, all of this was not as attractive of Han Li's attention as a small white jade pavilion in the middle of the swamp. This was because a golden, huge chest, roughly ten to twenty meters long and five meters wide, was floating in midair in the pavilion. Its lid was tightly shut, and its body had faint golden light flowing around it; one glance and one could tell it was definitely not a common object.

Han Li only glanced at it a few times before immediately shifting his gaze; this wasn't because Han Li was not moved by the treasures inside of this golden chest, but rather because a huge group of malicious people were about to arrive. It would be best to

quickly find a hiding place, since this was the truly pressing matter! Otherwise, his small life would be lost; what use would the treasures be to him!

Han Li's figure swayed a bit, and he slipped over to a random dirt mound far away from the tunnel entrance; then, he restrained his Qi in one breath utilizing a full-strength concealing technique. Next, he lay on top of the dirt mound unmoving; after hiding his appearance, Han Li was already beginning to blend into one entity with the black dirt. Gazing at it from afar, one would not be able to easily discover his traces.

Han Li had not prepared all of this for too long before the young fairy woman's figure appeared on the stairs at the tunnel entrance.

As soon as she appeared, she indifferently assessed the circumstances in this area; when she saw the huge golden chest in the white jade pavilion, her previously expressionless face finally began to be emotionally moved, and her eyes gradually revealed a fiery passion. Although she had heard disciples from her sect describing the golden chest here, she was much more astonished upon seeing it up close and in person.

The young woman walked down the steps, neatly standing in front of the swamp; the male and female disciples of the Masked Moon Sect following closely behind her all clambered and surged forth in an instant, forming a straight line behind the young woman.

In a place not too far away from where he had clearly seen all of this, he could not help but quietly grow apprehensive. At the same

time, his curiosity was greatly aroused regarding that leading young woman's identity.

“Is this where the Black Scaly Python is hidden?” The young woman's voice delicately sounded out, yet it was filled with an unspeakable dignity.

“Reporting to Martial Ancestor, that huge python is hidden inside of the swamp; it has previously swallowed ten or so disciples from various sects who had wanted to obtain the treasure chest. Its vicious reputation is widespread, and it has caused this place to become a forbidden area where disciples from the various sects no longer dare to come. However, this demonic beast truly is much stronger than regular top level demonic beasts; this one still hopes that Martial Ancestor takes special care!” a young woman replied respectfully, lowering her head.

“Heng! Did you think that I would be unable to even deal with a grade one demonic beast?” The young woman's delicate small face fell, and she adopted a ridiculous elderly air. However, this caused the expression of the white-clothed woman who had replied to drastically change, repeatedly saying “I do not dare!”

“You can withdraw! Everyone, follow the original plan to act; no matter how powerful this Black Scaly Python is, it definitely isn't the ‘Yin Yang Pulling Magic's’ opponent! No matter how strong it is, it is still a grade one demonic beast!” the young woman said with an unquestionable tone, lifting the spirits of all the disciples behind her.

Chapter 205: Watching The Battle

After giving orders to all of the disciples, the young woman turned around and looked at the swamp in front of her, using a faint voice to murmur to herself: “It seems like that object should be inside of this chest! The previous few locations were all a waste; all I got was some trash!”

The young woman’s voice was inaudible; apart from herself, the other disciples could not hear anything at all. They were all extremely excited for the imminent, upcoming big battle.

After the young woman’s orders had been passed down, the male and female disciples from the Masked Moon Sect immediately stood side-by-side with their Dao companions. They actually both reached out a hand very skillfully and held them together.

Suddenly, the two overlapping hands individually emitted a blue and red strange brilliance; then, following down their arms, it spread to these disciples’ entire bodies, causing the six pairs of Masked Moon Sect disciples to be covered with light, red light shrouding the males’ bodies, blue light shooting off of the females, forming a strange blue-red criss-cross shape. Only three disciples remained, one male and two female, having already lost their Dao companions. They could only bring out some magic tools, merely making some basic preparations.

Han Li lay on the mound of dirt. Although he had not heard the young woman murmuring to herself, he had exactly heard the female disciple in front call her “Martial Ancestor”. This instantly caused him to almost bite his tongue and injure it in a moment of

surprise!

“Martial Ancestor of the Masked Moon Sect”, what was this notion? Han Li was already no longer a rookie in the cultivation world, and he was very clear about this situation. That was a Core Formation cultivator expert who was of the same level as his sect’s Martial Ancestor Li! That this kind of an expert would actually appear in the forbidden area, which was restricted from cultivators of the Foundation Establishment stage and above, caused Han Li’s head to whirl!

At this time, seeing that all of her sect’s disciples were properly prepared, the young woman began to take action contentedly!

He only saw the young woman slightly open her dainty mouth and blow out her own magic treasure, the precious Pearl Sparrow Ring. When this item came out from her mouth, it immediately flew into the air above the swamp, whirling in the air; it actually became the same size as a room in a house.

Next, the young woman beneath it formed hand incantations for a magic technique and pointed with her finger; a streak of red light shot from her hand to the ring. In an instant, that round ring’s color rapidly changed from pink to a fiery, blazing red.

On top of the dirt mound, Han Li was stunned by what he saw. This kind of impact and strength...if one said that this wasn’t a magic treasure, one could beat him to death and he wouldn’t believe it.

Since the young woman could control this magic treasure, her being a Core Formation cultivator was undoubtable. But how could she have muddled her way into the forbidden area, and why did her magic power seem to be only of the peak of the Qi Condensation stage? This string of questions flew around in Han Li's head, but he still had no way of answering them.

The young woman had yet to take the next step when the swamp below began to show signs of movement. With a certain part of the swamp as the center, the nearby silt began to roil; in addition, the roiling area became greater and greater, and the waves higher and higher. It actually slowly formed into a huge protrusion, the sight of which was extremely shocking.

A trace of doubt flitted across the young woman's face when she saw this; based on her memories, the Black Scaly Python had never seemed to be this imposing!

However, seeing that the demonic beast's appearance was imminent, the young woman did not dare to hesitate. Her two hands formed hand incantations for the Blue Flower magic technique, with her attention connected to the huge Pearl Swallow Ring, which began to spin in the air. In a short amount of time, it became blurry because of how fast it was spinning; the hundreds of fireballs inside of it also became a red sea of fire in the time it takes to roll one's eyes, actually dissolving into one entity.

“Go”

The young woman spit out as her magic technique suddenly stabilized.

All of a sudden, the round ring's spinning stopped abruptly, and the encapsulated sea of flames thus suddenly became a thick, large fire cyclone pillar that aggressively shot out downwards, directly spurting towards the huge protrusion from the swamp.

However, before the flame column had neared the swamp, a column of black, inky water as thick as a bowl's opening shot out of the silt protrusion with a "puchi", just in time to block the flames shooting towards it.

Suddenly, the explosions from both sides began to emit "zila" noises, and a large ball of mist immediately rose up in pieces, causing the surroundings to be steaming with fog in the time it takes to roll one's eyes. Everything became blurry.

"This isn't the Black Scaly Python!"

The young woman's originally somewhat doubtful expression, upon seeing the column of water that was as dark as ink, immediately changed as she spoke.

As if replying to the young woman's words, the sound of a wail came from the vast white fog; an extremely strange, piercing scream began to sound and pierce towards the sky. Then, with a "hula", an extremely hot gust of wind began to blow, causing the surrounding white air to disappear with a roll, revealing the true colors of the demonic beast.

A black, swarthy, snake-shaped demon covered with huge scales

appeared before everyone's eyes.

This seemingly snake-like yet not a snake demonic beast's bulk was not actually too big, only thirty to forty meters long; however, its entire body from head to toe was shrouded by a layer of faint black fog, appearing extremely demonic. In addition, its external appearance from head to tail was not much different from that of a regular black python. Of course, its black and shiny huge scales were an exception.

“Inky Flood Dragon!”

The young woman, upon clearly seeing the demonic beast's appearance, couldn't help but cry out; her face revealed an apprehensive yet excited expression.

However, the ten or so disciples standing behind her were somewhat puzzled. Wasn't this the “Black Scaly Python”? Since when did it become some “Inky Flood Dragon”?

The young woman couldn't afford to explain clearly to all the disciples because the demonic beast floating numerous meters above the ground had already found the main culprit in disturbing its rest. The two small, green eyes on the side of its head flashed malevolently; it opened its mouth, and another black column of water leaped towards the people from the Masked Moon Sect.

“Beast! Looking to die!”

The young woman knew very well the strength of the Inky Flood Dragon; although this demonic beast seemed as if it was young, she did not dare to be careless at all! She hurriedly controlled the Pearl Swallow Ring, instantly releasing a red ring of light that suddenly flashed and blocked in front of the young woman. Then, a string of fireballs came flying out from within the ring, causing that black water to be stopped halfway to its destination.

“Receive, Speed, Restrain, Arrest, Lock!”

The young woman’s two hands formed a half-moon as she awe-inspiringly spit out these five words from her mouth.

The huge Pearl Swallow Ring, when these five words had just left her mouth, began to jitter rapidly in midair; then, it began to emit a low ring, and disappeared into thin air. This caused the spiritually wise Inky Flood Dragon to blink its small eyes, staring blankly because of it.

But the next instant, the ring actually directly appeared on the demonic beast’s forehead while humming. It took advantage of the demonic beast’s slowness to react and instantly sank down, then rapidly became much smaller. In the blink of an eye, the Pearl Swallow Ring actually abruptly wrapped around the Inky Flood Dragon’s midsection, and then a fiery light rose up rapidly on the ring. Instantly, half of the demonic beast’s body was enveloped in the fierce flames.

“Move quickly! I can’t contain this Inky Flood Dragon for too long.”

Although the Pearl Swallow Ring had securely wrapped the demonic beast, the young woman didn't have any relaxing expression; instead, she sent out commands behind her with anxiety.

Although the Masked Moon Sect disciples behind her did not know how the Black Scaly Python had suddenly become the Inky Flood Dragon that their Martial Ancestor informed them about, this did not prevent them from releasing the offensive that they had prepared a long time ago.

“Attack”

Under the orders of a relatively elderly, white-clothed female, ten columns of red and blue intersecting light were released from these male and female disciple's bodies, emitting an appalling “chi chi” sound that tore through the air. They unmistakably attacked the immobile demonic beast.

A series of loud “hong hong” sounds spread out; when these columns had just reached near the demonic beast's body, they were forcibly blocked by the faint black fog that shrouded its body. Fierce bursting sounds rang out.

“Continue to attack, the Inky Flood Dragon's protective fog can't hold on much longer!” The young woman commanded hastily, her eyes sharp. At the same time, she continued to push the red flaming technique on the Pearl Swallow Ring, causing the flames surrounding the demonic beast to become even more vigorous.

Under the string of commands from the young woman, the Masked Moon Sect disciples incessantly shot out individual columns of red and blue light, hitting the demonic beast's body. Although they had yet to break through that layer of black fog, they had already caused that demonic beast to howl and go crazy; it bared its teeth and viciously shook the two halves of its body that were able to move, furiously trying to break free from the ring's grasp. However, its struggle was futile; under the young woman's all-out efforts to restrict it, the round ring was fixed in midair, not moving even a little, thoroughly locking down its body.

Watching from the side, Han Li was struck with fright; he had never seen the spectacle of a group of cultivators this large battling a common enemy. Even more, the appearance of the magic treasure and fact that the opponent was a demonic beast that wasn't weak was a big eye-opener for him.

However, Han Li also decided that whether the demonic beast beat its enemies or the Masked Moon Sect people killed the demonic beast, he would quietly sneak away after the big battle. This was not the time to casually expose his own tracks!

“Wu.....”

Just as Han Li was entertaining all sorts of ideas in his head, the Inky Flood Dragon suddenly let out a long cry, its sound numerous times louder than before; at the same time, its scream was filled with pain.

Han Li was started and immediately fixed his gaze there.

He saw that the black fog on the demonic beast had already completely dissipated, and a bowl-opening-wide bloody hole had appeared on the area of its body covered by the huge scales. Evidently, it had been hurt by the red and blue columns of light. The agony also caused the demonic beast's struggling to become even more crazy!

“It seems that the people from the Masked Moon Sect are of a higher skill level!” Han Li couldn't help but think after seeing this.

“Not good, you guys be careful! I can't contain this Inky Flood Dragon anymore!”

But at this time, the young woman's voice traveled over, causing Han Li to stare blankly for a moment. It seemed like it would not be easy to say who the winner would be!

Chapter 206: Accident

This young woman's words obviously caused those Masked Moon Disciples to be startled; based on their experiences from the past two days, as long as the top level demonic beasts had been bound by their Martial Ancestor, not a single one was able to escape the ring's restriction in a short amount of time. How was this demonic beast able to escape so quickly?

Although their hearts were filled with doubt, they did not dare to ignore the young woman's warning, and they immediately became extremely cautious; of course, the attack of the red and blue columns of light from their hands became even more fierce. In the time it takes to roll one's eyes, ten or so more bloody holes appeared on the Inky Flood Dragon's body. The fresh, red flood dragon blood stained a large part of the swamp below it red.

Of course, this enraged the flood dragon even more; it opened its mouth and let out a piercing, endless howl, causing the entire underground area to quake and drone. This caused all of the people there to be hit by a sudden bout of dizziness as everything seemed to spin.

With a "rip", a strange tearing sound rang out in midair! When everybody regained consciousness and focused on taking a look, their expressions drastically changed.

The round ring magic treasure was still floating in midair unmoving; however, the Inky Flood Dragon demonic beast within it had disappeared into thin air, leaving behind its tattered skin which hung on top of the round ring and fluttered incessantly.

This demonic beast had actually shed its skin and escaped!

Not only were the Masked Moon Sect disciples surprised, but even the young woman, when she saw the scene in front of her, was extremely stunned!

When she had yelled at her sect's disciples to be careful, it wasn't because she had expected this flood dragon to shed its skin.

The Inky Flood Dragon's escaping power was too great; her magic strength truly was not enough to continue to contain it. Having experienced the restrictive power of the Pearl Swallow Ring, the demonic beast should have also known this. So why would it make a move that hurt so much of its vitality? Could it be.....!

The young woman's heart moved, and she thought of a frightening reason. Her face was painted completely white, and she hurriedly searched everywhere for the Inky Flood Dragon, wanting to verify her own extremely terrible guess!

“It's over there!”

A sharp-eyed Masked Moon Sect disciple was the first to discover the demonic beast incessantly swimming around near the topmost part of the underground area; at this time, it had a completely new look, its form very different from how it was before.

Its black body had become snow white, without scales, and its

originally 30-40 foot long body had increased to 50-60 feet, and it also widened significantly; only faint scars remained where it had been injured, so faint that it was almost invisible. The most shocking thing was that the triangular snake body had grown a inch-long, jet black sharp horns, a faint light shining through it. Its midsection had also grown an extra pair of incomparably sharp white claws. This demonic beast had actually turned from a snake into a flood dragon, and its form had become exactly the same as the legendary flood dragon.

Seeing this form of the Inky Flood Dragon, the people from the Masked Moon Sect were naturally extremely shocked. However, before they were able to make any moves, the young woman standing at the very front gave out an order with an ashen face that caused them to feel very stunned.

“Everyone immediately retreat, the Inky Flood Dragon has already reached grade two! Its strength is far above Core Formation cultivators; all of us combined are not its opponent. Immediately escape this area, I can delay it for a short while.”

After the young woman said this solemnly, she immediately waved her hand, causing that Pearl Swallow Ring to return in front of her. She then assumed a completely defensive posture.

When the male and female disciples behind her heard this, they started to hesitate somewhat; although that Inky Flood Dragon had shed its skin and its appearance had drastically changed, they were just inflicting heavy wounds on it. It was hard for them to believe that the strength of this demonic beast, could become vastly different in the blink of an eye.

But in the moment that they hesitated, it was enough for them to regret it for life! This was because the white Inky Flood Dragon suddenly moved its body and rushed like lightning towards the space above all of the Masked Moon Sect people; then, it opened its mouth wide, and an endless torrent of purple liquid spurted out of its mouth.

“Quickly hide, you can’t receive it!”

The young woman hurriedly yelled out, her expression one of anxiety; at the same time, the Pearl Swallow Ring immediately increased multiple times in size, and it flew out and blocked the greater half of the purple liquid.

Hearing this, some of the more quick-witted disciples, either immediately turned around and slipped into the azure stone tunnel or advanced a few steps and hid within the cover of the round ring magic treasure. The remaining five or six disciples, however, were confident in the strength of their magic tools; not only did they not hide, but they actually released one or two shiny objects, protecting their own foreheads. It seemed as if they decided to face it head-on!

“Idiots!”

The young woman, seeing some of the disciples not listening to her words, revealed a furious expression, green light flashing across her face. However, her magic power was limited, and she had no way to increase the cover of the magic treasure. She could

only leave them to fend for themselves!

As expected, what happened afterwards proved that what the young woman had said was true. The purple liquid that didn't land on the round ring magic treasure fiercely spurted towards those disciples' foreheads. Those magic tools that, at a glance, did not seem common, flashed a few times, then emitted a few plumes of azure smoke and disappeared under the onslaught of purple liquid, having been completely melted.

Those few Masked Moon Sect disciples only had time to yell out before disappearing without a trace under the onslaught of purple liquid. Only a large hole a few tens of feet deep remained where they had once stood. This caused the faces of the surviving Masked Moon Sect disciples to become deathly pale.

At this time, having wiped out those few disciples, the oppressive feeling from the Inky Flood Dragon slightly dissipated, and it finally closed its mouth and stopped spitting. Instead, it gazed at the young woman with cold eyes. It was as if it was very clear that this Martial Ancestor from the Masked Moon Sect was its formidable adversary.

“Why are you still staring? Still not quickly leaving! This beast just turned from a snake into a flood dragon; its should not have too much Dan liquid remaining, and it won't lightly spit it out!” The young woman coldly commanded with a chilly face, not pay attention to the gaze of the Inky Flood Dragon.

Then, she bitterly said to herself: “You're only a small snake that just reached grade two, yet you still dare to act so arrogantly in

front of me. If I had recovered the magic power that I originally had, I would've captured you long ago to have you guard my Immortal's Cave!"

Ignoring the young woman's unwilling expression, how could the other Masked Moon Sect disciples, having seen the tragedy that befell those few people, dare to stay even for a moment? They immediately and obediently retreated into the tunnel with a "hula", and then rushed wildly towards the outside.

Not long afterwards, sounds of a demonic beast's roars came from behind them, as well as the young woman's gentle scolding and the rumbling sounds of a battle. These disciples scrambled wildly up the stairs, while at the same time being filled with fear.

Their Martial Ancestor had clearly said that she could only entangle it for a short while; if they walked too slowly and were caught again by the Inky Flood Dragon, each person would receive a mouthful of that frightening purple liquid. There was no room to dodge in this tunnel, so they would die an unjust death!

At this time, the young woman was flying back and forth in the air and incessantly harassing the Inky Flood Dragon, her fragrant sweat dripping from her body. That Pearl Swallow Ring magic treasure was superbly used by her, provoking the demonic beast to roar in anger continuously. However, the flood dragon was also unable to do anything to the young woman, whose movement techniques were extremely abrupt.

The young woman obviously had yet to use her full strength, only using one hand to control the Pearl Swallow Ring while the

other hand held a fire-red spirit stone, continuously sucking out its Spiritual Qi in an attempt to recover her own magic power.

After the young woman felt that enough time had passed; she retrieved the fire attribute spirit stone and took out a bright gold talisman.

Without saying anything else, she took advantage of when the Inky Flood Dragon's attention was fully attracted by the Pearl Swallow Ring to raise her hand, and that talisman became a streak of golden light, shooting towards the demonic beast. When it arrived in front of its body, the golden light suddenly separated into countless golden strands, suddenly and securely binding that demonic beast. It was unable to move even a tiny bit, angering it and causing another burst of wild roars.

A trace of mockery flitted across her eyes when she saw this; then, she reluctantly glanced at the golden chest floating in the white jade pavilion before gritting her teeth and flying back to the tunnel entrance and landing there. She was very clear that this intermediate mid-grade golden strands talisman could not bind the demonic beast for too long; it would be best for her to leave this place early. As for the treasures inside of that golden chest, she would think of ways to obtain them later!

The young woman landed, wanting to raise her leg and step into the azure stone tunnel, but a deafening cry suddenly came thundering from the tunnel; this cry came closer and closer and grew louder and louder, causing the young woman to be a little alarmed and uncertain. The elegant foot that she had raised actually did not dare to enter the tunnel for a while.

A dazzling azure light suddenly appeared within the tunnel, sweeping through the tunnel like a torrential tide. Wherever it went, all of the azure stone tunnel seemed to come alive, furiously extruding towards the middle. In the blink of an eye, the many tens of feet tall tunnel appeared to have no gap whatsoever. When the young woman saw this, she hurriedly retreated numerous steps, as if she had seen a ghost, and couldn't help but cry out:

“Small Five Elements Xumi Mountain Magic!”

Then, her face was deathly pale, and she stared foolishly at the disappearing tunnel. The self-confident expression she had always had disappeared completely in an instant.

At this time, in midair behind the young woman, the golden strands on the Inky Flood Dragon's body began to tear inch by inch. This demonic beast was about to break through its restrictions in the time it took to roll one's eyes. When the young woman had recovered and turned around to see this happen, her heart thumped even harder, as if it had fell into an abyss.

In the big lobby of the stone temple, outside of the tunnel, ten or so Masked Moon Sect disciples were staring rigidly at a white-clothed woman; she was actually the crafty woman who had called herself one of the Masked Moon Sect's Twin Beauties. However, at this moment her face was pale, and she seemed to be completely at a loss!

“Junior Martial Sister Zhao, what exactly did you do just then?”

Why is it that after you threw a strange talisman into the tunnel, the tunnel opening disappeared? Could you wanted to murder the Southern Palace Martial Ancestor?” a male Masked Moon Sect disciples asked sternly with a panicked expression.

This was not a laughing matter! If this Martial Ancestor really was to never come out again because of this, their fates would be tragic! After they returned, at best their cultivation bases would be completely destroyed and they would be expelled from the sect; at worst, their lives would be in danger, and they would have to suffer . They were very clear about the significance of a loss of a Core Formation cultivator to the sect; thus, they became increasingly anxious.

“I didn’t do anything! I only placed an intermediate low-grade “Small Five Elements Talisman” near the entrance, intending to wait for the demonic beast to chase over to activate the talisman, giving it some pain to eat!” the white-clothed young woman exclaimed, completely flustered.

She was very clear that no matter how strong her background was, it would be useless in the face of causing this kind of disaster! Thinking of the frightening consequences of the young woman not coming out, this woman felt her hands and feet grow cold!

“Stop speaking nonsense! Let’s try and see if we can open up this tunnel and rescue the Southern Palace Martial Ancestor!” snapped a somewhat aged male disciple.

This sentence’s utterance immediately reminded the Masked Moon Sect disciples; they hurriedly pulled out various colorful

magic tools and surrounded the area that was originally the tunnel entrance, incessantly slamming them down, trying to break through the restrictions and save the young woman.

After a few hours, in the underground world a few hundreds of feet below, the young woman opened her eyes wide and gazed in disbelief at the person who had suddenly appeared. With a hand gesture, this person sent out seven golden blades to attack the Inky Flood Dragon while the other hand released a black iron shield, blocking the spitting attack of the Inky Flood Dragon and preventing it from reaching the two people.

This person was the Yellow Maple Valley fellow that she had once seen and felt he was somewhat interesting. This person, when her magic power had been depleted from flying around and avoiding the attacks of the Inky Flood Dragon for those few hours, had suddenly appeared from an unknown location, saving her when she was in critical danger.

At the same time that Han Li was barely parrying the attacks of the Inky Flood Dragon, he glanced quickly at the young woman's completely surprised face and bitterly laughed in his heart.

Originally, Han Li was leisurely watching the entertaining battle between the Masked Moon Sect and the Inky Flood Dragon. In fact, after the Inky Flood Dragon had evolved and leveled up, apart from being very stunned, he did not feel panicked at all. However, when the young woman had wanted to retreat and after the azure stone tunnel's entrance had suddenly disappeared, Han Li could not continue to sit there idly.

Wasn't the disappearance of the tunnel entrance implying that no matter whether it was the young woman or the demonic beast, he would be unable to leave regardless of who was left! This caused Han Li to begin to panic.

At this time, the Inky Flood Dragon that had escaped and the young woman began to fight again; obviously, this Masked Moon Sect Martial Ancestor was completely at a disadvantage.

Even if she continued to coax that round ring magic treasure into attacking the Inky flood Dragon, the defensive ability of the demonic beast with new skin had reached the point where it was unbelievably strong. Regardless of whether she used the round ring magic treasure that spurted out fierce flames to incinerate the Flood Dragon or directly used the body of the magic treasure to attack, she was unable to inflict any serious wounds to it. At most, she would bruise or burn a small section of its body, causing this beast to become even more berserk. Its chase of the young woman also became more frantic, even forcing the young woman into desperate situations numerous times.

However, this Masked Moon Sect Martial Ancestor carried many intermediate talismans on her, which caused Han Li to gain a significant amount of enlightenment. Rarely seen talismans like the "Fleeing Earth Talisman", "Water Prison Talisman", "Firebird Talisman", etc. were used in a row and were each clearly seen once by Han Li.

Whenever the young woman was about to be injured by the demonic beast, she would throw one out, immediately resulting in strange effects that turned peril into safety. Unfortunately, the

young woman obviously did not have any talismans with great destructive power, so every time she could only barely preserve herself. It seemed like relying on talismans to injure the Inky Flood Dragon would not be possible!

The struggle inside of Han Li's heart became even more fierce upon seeing this young woman being thrown into a panic by the Inky Flood Dragon,

If the tunnel was still intact like before, Han Li naturally would not be concerned with the survival of this Martial Ancestor of the Masked Moon Sect; however, having seen the tunnel mysteriously disappear, this place had become a dangerous location, and Han Li's mentality naturally would be greatly different from before.

In addition, he had heard the Masked Moon Sect Martial Ancestor call out some "Small Five Elements Xumi Forbidden Technique" with his own ears, as if she was very clear as to what had caused the disappearance of the tunnel. Thus, the hope of escaping from this place still had to lie with this woman. He knew nothing about forbidden techniques and the like, so this young female "expert" absolutely could not die right now!

However, Han Li also refrained from moving rashly, fearing that the young woman would have some kind of lethal last resort. Thus, it wasn't until the young woman had exhausted her energy and threw out all kinds of talismans, reached her wits end, and her face revealed an expression of hopelessness, that Han Li made a move to save this young woman.

The young woman, apart from rejoicing at Han Li's sudden

appearance, felt somewhat upset! She had seen, exceptionally clearly, Han Li's intention to allow the battle with the Inky Flood Dragon to proceed to this point.

However, no matter what, dealing with the increasingly ferocious Inky Flood Dragon was the most pressing matter, so after the young woman had rested for a moment, she wordlessly began to coax her magic treasure to attack.

When Han Li brushed with the Inky Flood Dragon, he began to quietly complain. When he had been watching the young woman battle with this beast, he had not seen at all that this demonic beast was so strong. It wasn't until now, when he had personally taken the stage, that he experienced the Inky Flood Dragon's terror.

His "Gold Beetle Swarm Mother Blade" could be considered to be a premium product even among top grade magic tools, but when those streaks of golden light got close to the Inky Flood Dragon, they were carelessly swatted away by its two claws and its tail, immediately flying backwards roughly a hundred feet away. They had no strength to hold their own at all.

Even if Han Li relied on quantity, using a few golden blades at one time was enough for one or two golden blades to stab the Inky Flood Dragon's body as a fluke, but apart from leaving a white mark, there was no other effect, leaving Han Li completely silent.

In addition, Han Li didn't dare to be sloppy against the Inky Flood Dragon's attacks. Not to mention allowing the opponent's claws or tail to come into contact with him, Han Li would even use the iron shield to block every drop of the black water that the

opponent occasionally spit out.

Just like that, this magic tool that had saved Han Li numerous times was also corroded by the unremarkable black water, forming many holes. One truly did not know how much longer it would be able to last.

If the strength of this black water was already this frightening, wouldn't that even more ruthless purple liquid be even more unreasonable! No wonder those Masked Moon Sect disciples had died so straightforwardly; magic tools were of absolutely no use!

The more Han Li fought with the Inky Flood Dragon, the more apprehensive he became; he virtually completely relied on his movement techniques to dodge the demonic beast's fierce attacks. Those golden blades simply could not block the opponent at all.

No wonder the young woman had told her sect's disciples to immediately leave this area! Apart from people with outstanding movement techniques like himself, Han Li really could not find many Qi Condensation disciples who could deal with this demonic beast even for one moment.

It was at this time that the young woman's Pearl Swallow Ring came up, instantly decreasing the pressure on Han Li by a great amount. After all, this round ring magic treasure was still able to create some pain for the Inky Flood Dragon, causing it to be somewhat wary of it.

“Little fellow, you hid there for so long, why didn't you make a

move earlier? If you had made a move earlier, perhaps I would still have an opportunity to inflict a heavy wound on this beast!” the young woman asked resentfully as she controlled her magic treasure’s attacks.

“I was worried you would kill me and steal my treasures!” Han Li replied very obediently, instantly stifling the young woman from speaking for a while.

Han Li was very clear that despite this woman’s apparent youth, if one were to discuss her true age, she would definitely be old enough to act as his grandmother with some more to spare, so he should display less of his cleverness ! It would be best for him to speak his thoughts frankly to allow both sides to ally with one another and fight the enemy instead of being a hindrance to each other.

As for the other person’s identity as a Core Formation expert and the discrepancy between his status and hers, Han Li purposefully feigned ignorance and ambiguously passed over it. At any rate, based on the other person’s current power, she were still unable to control him! Han Li held no fear in his heart today for this young woman who had lost most of her magic power.

“Young fellow, you have so many thoughts at such a tender age; I only fear you may not live for very long!” said the young woman with a bitter tone after being low-spirited for a while.

Hearing this, Han Li laughed once and did not make a retort. However, he quietly said in his heart: “If I had thought any less, I might have died many times already, not to mention in the

future!”

Seeing that Han Li did not continue to speak, allowing her to say that much, the young woman lost some of the anger in her heart and began to consider a plan to deal with the enemy.

Do you have any way of inflicting a heavy wound on this flood dragon? If you do, quickly say it!” The young woman, seeing that the two of them, even after forming an alliance with Han Li for a short while, were still being chased around everywhere in disarray with no spare room for retaliation, finally could not endure it and asked.

“I do have one, but it requires for the opponent to be bound for a short amount of time; you cannot allow it to move!” Han Li hurriedly replied as he used the iron shield to block another spitting attack by the Inky Flood Dragon while his figure leaped around incessantly, attempting to widen the distance between him and the Inky Flood Dragon.

“Okay, I’m going to use the last magic power I have; I can still bind it for a short moment. Hopefully it’s enough for you to use! But is your method reliable?” The young woman’s eyes lit up when she heard that, and she closely followed the flood dragon that was chasing after Han Li, using the Pearl Swallow Ring to fiercely bash the flood dragon’s body before hurriedly saying.

“I have a very powerful treasure talisman. It definitely can break through this flood dragon’s defenses!” Han Li said with full self-confidence. He did not believe that this demonic beast would still be able to block the full-force attack of the Golden Light Brick.

“Treasure talisman?”

When the young woman heard this, her heart was filled with joy. She had never expected that the Yellow Maple Valley young man in front of her eyes actually could obtain such a rare item. Although she also had a few treasure talismans, their strength was not even on par with her Pearl Swallow Ring! Since the other person had so much self confidence, it seemed like it should be a purely destructive treasure talisman; this was definitely an extremely rare object!

Since she realized that Han Li’s method was feasible, the young woman immediately stopped in midair, then started the incantation that had once bound the flood dragon before. The Pearl Swallow Ring securely wrapped around the demonic beast’s body again, causing it to start struggling in anger.

Han Li, seeing this golden opportunity, immediately placed the Flying Dark-Iron Shield in front of his body. Then, he pulled out the Golden Light Brick treasure talisman and sat down cross-legged!

Chapter 207: Slaughtering A Flood Dragon And Victory Spoils

Under Han Li's control, the Golden Light Brick treasure talisman manifested the magic treasure's material existence after a brief moment; a golden, foot-long brick floated into midair, light shining in all directions.

The spiritual power inside of Han Li, like flooding river water, poured unstoppably into this brick. Not long after, one third of his magic power had been sucked away. This caused the gold light above his head to become even more dazzling; one simply would not dare to look at it directly!

While the young woman was using all her energy to enclose the Inky Flood Dragon, she was closely watching Han Li's every movement. When she saw that gold brick emerge, she finally let go of her originally somewhat perturbed state of mind. She knew that Han Li did not lie and that this treasure talisman really could break through the demonic beast's defenses.

It seemed as if the Inky Flood Dragon could also detect the discouraging turn of events, and its two claws tenaciously grabbed the two sides of the round ring, its attempts to escape becoming even more violent. It actually caused the young woman's Pearl Swallow Ring to begin to tremble! This caused the young woman's expression to change, and she hastily shouted at Han Li:

“Hurry up, it's about to escape!”

When Han Li heard this, he did not dare to hesitate and pointed his finger at the treasure talisman on his forehead. In an instant, the gold brick flew with a “whizz” towards the Inky Flood Dragon, and halfway to its destination it suddenly began to metamorphose drastically, becoming like a small mountain, ferociously smashing down at the Inky Flood Dragon.

The struggling Inky Flood Dragon knew that the situation was far from good, but its two green eyes suddenly glinted ominously, and it opened its mouth, causing the purple liquid that Han Li was very afraid of to spurt out again. It blocked the falling golden brick perfectly, actually causing it to have no way of descending for a while.

Seeing this, the young woman and Han Li were both surprised. Han Li had to focus on controlling the golden brick, so he could only stare helplessly at it, unable to do anything, but the young woman bit her apricot lips and pulled out a yellow pearl from her bosom. With a raise of her hand, she slammed it towards the demonic beast, which was in a deadlock with the golden brick.

With a “Bang”, the pearl slammed into the head region of the Inky Flood Dragon and immediately burst open. Instantly, a small cloud of yellow fog shrouded the Flood Dragon’s body, causing the Inky Flood Dragon to begin to howl in panic. Naturally, the purple liquid that was being shot out also stopped.

Without the purple liquid to block, the somewhat weakened tip of light from the golden brick descended at once, perfectly and solidly slamming onto the flood dragon’s body. A huge, earth-shaking sound exploded out, and a dazzling gold light lit up the

entire underground area in a flash, but it immediately became pitch black again, reverting to its normal state.

Next the golden brick that had returned to its original size turned again into a streak of gold light, flying to Han Li's side.

Only the dying demonic beast was left in midair.

Half of the Inky Flood Dragon's head region had been smashed to a pulp, and a flood dragon eye had completely burst out of its socket, flying to an unknown location. The other eye naturally was still there, but it was also incessantly bleeding. The entire Inky Flood Dragon seemed to be incredibly miserable!

It seemed like this demonic beast was not far from dying.

Seeing this, the young woman rejoiced in her heart and hurriedly pulled out a small crystal vase from her storage pouch, then muttered some words at the small vase. Then, she pointed at the Inky Flood Dragon, and a few strands of black air came flying out of the lip of the vase, eerily wrapping around the Inky Flood Dragon's body.

Not long after, a small green flood dragon completely different from the previous Inky Flood Dragon was forcibly shot out from within the Inky Flood Dragon's body. Although it bared its fangs and brandished its claws, struggling fiercely, it was still slowly pulled into the small vase.

When the young woman closed the vase, she closely assessed the miniature flood dragon inside of the Few Eyes Vase and was unable to conceal the smile on her face; her entire person began to beam with joy. Then, she glanced at the corpse of the Inky Flood Dragon closely again; it had already lost the odor of death. She began to ponder.

Han Li, seeing the young woman's activity, immediately realized that she had collected the primordial spirit of that flood dragon; although he didn't know what the Inky Flood Dragon's primordial spirit could be used for, based on the young woman's elated reaction, he knew it was considerably valuable.

At this time, the young woman reached out her hand and retrieved the Pearl Swallow Ring; the Inky Flood Dragon's corpse immediately fell from midair, happening to land right in front of Han Li's eyes.

"Since I took this flood dragon's primordial spirit, its corpse can be left for you. After all, it was killed by the two of us!" the young woman said calmly, flying and landing next to Han Li side.

When Han Li heard this, he glanced at the perfectly satisfied young woman, then lowered his head and looked at the fleshy body of the Inky Flood Dragon. He said melancholically in his heart:

"It's easy for you to say. Giving this corpse to me, perhaps it's because you reckon that I have no use for it. In addition, this Inky Flood Dragon is as sturdy as a turtle shell, and both you and I are very clear about this! It seems like you want to watch me make a fool out of myself!"

Thinking to this point, Han Li caused a cold light to flash across his hand, and a huge silver sword appeared in his hand; it was precisely the extremely strong magic tool from the barefooted man from earlier.

Han Li wordlessly stabbed the huge sword with force. With a “puchi”, this silver sword actually sank three inches into the Inky Flood Dragon’s corpse. Although it wasn’t stabbed too far in, it had finally broken through the flood dragon’s defenses, causing the young woman to the side’s jaw to drop in astonishment, unable to close it for some time.

Han Li, seeing the young woman’s expression, found it to be laughable in his heart and continued to wave around this sword, about to stab down again.

“Halt, let me see this sword!” said the recovered young woman slowly, staring at that silver sword with a look of amazement, causing Han Li to become startled.

“What is there to be afraid of? I am a dignified Core Formation cultivator, what kind of treasures have I not seen before? It’s just that this sword of yours is really somewhat strange and I’m somewhat curious is all!” snapped the young woman, seeing that Han Li was somewhat hesitant, and rolled her eyes at him.

Although the young woman’s appearance was young, her charming, flirtatious gaze actually caused Han Li’s heart to speed up, unable to control himself!

“This sword really does have some problems; after I obtained it, I don’t know why but I have no way of controlling this sword. Otherwise, we would not have been in such tough straits when dealing with the Inky Flood Dragon earlier!” Since the young woman said so, Han Li could only force himself to hand over that sword to the young woman as he slowly explained.

As of right now, he was still unwilling to fall out with the young woman; after all, based on her unhurried movements in the face of desperate circumstances, she should know how to get out of this place and should have a well-thought-out plan in her heart. And the young woman did not seem to be on guard against him; it seemed like she was somewhat clear about his thoughts, not afraid that he would attempt some kind of sneak attack.

“Zeze! Sure enough, it’s true; it really is too extravagant!” the young woman sighed with regret after receiving the sword. After she had closely caressed it and identified it, her face revealed an expression of extortion.

“What’s the matter?” Han Li couldn’t help but ask, seeing that the young woman had seemingly noticed something.

“Nothing really! The reason why this silver sword is so sharp is only because silver essence was added into it, which is usually only used when refining magic treasures. In addition, its quantity is not small, more than enough to allow this item’s quality to reach that of normal magic treasures!” said the young woman indifferently, carelessly returning the sword to Han Li

“Silver essence?” said Han Li, a bit surprised.

“Even if I told you, you wouldn’t understand! Only True Fire from a Core Formation cultivator or above would be able to extract raw materials for magic treasures in large quantities from pure silver; it’s extremely precious. My Pearl Swallow Ring also contains this kind of material,” said the young woman somewhat impatiently.

Hearing this, Han Li cursed again in his heart: “I asked you precisely because I didn’t know! If I knew, would I need to ask?”

Although he had clearly seen the young woman’s unwillingness to speak any further, Han Li still turned a blind eye and continued to ask:

“Why can other people use this sword to meet enemies while I simply have no way to control it?”

Seeing Han Li’s manner of asking until the end, the young woman became somewhat unhappy in her heart, but she still replied indifferently:

“The original owner of this sword had used a heart-refining technique to refine it. This kind of method is extremely corrupt, so of course other people have no way of using it! Unless you were to melt down this sword and re-refine it, this sword can only be a useless object to other people!”

Han Li's expression was somewhat ugly; he originally had held very high hopes for this sword, but if what the other person said was true, his hopes would be completely dashed!

“A useless object? I don't see it! Can't I still use it now?” Han Li said coldly and abruptly after a few moments of silence. Then, he began to control the silver sword in an unrestrained way, wildly stabbing at the Flood Dragon corpse; in the time it took to roll one's eyes, he had cut open the Inky Flood Dragon.

The young woman, seeing Han Li's extremely crude butchering appearance, couldn't help but knit her eyebrows and retreat a few steps, increasing her distance from Han Li. Then, she bleakly said:

“Although this Inky Flood Dragon had just entered grade two, its entire body is full of valuable raw materials! Flood dragon skin can be refined into good armor, its sharp horns and claws are the most important raw materials in refining top-grade magic tools, and the remaining Dan liquid inside of it is also necessary to refine a few precious pills!”

Seemingly for no reason, the young woman explained everything clearly in great detail to Han Li, causing him to feel somewhat unsettled apart from being amazed. He didn't know what the other person's intentions were!

“What a pity! If this Flood Dragon had entered the third grade, the flood dragon Dan within its forehead definitely could cause many Core Formation cultivators to fight furiously for it; whether for refining pills or magic tools, it's incredibly useful!” sighed the young woman regretfully all of a sudden.

“Flood dragon Dan? What color is it, is it this?” Han Li suddenly pulled out a red, fist-sized sphere from the Flood Dragon’s midsection, holding it and mentioning it to the completely surprised young woman.

“Yi! What is this? Did you retrieve it from the Inky Flood Dragon’s body?” The young woman, feeling this was something unanticipated, couldn’t help but scoot closer to Han Li to take a close look at it.

“It really is somewhat similar! It’s only that this Inky Flood Dragon has obviously only just entered the second grade and cannot possibly produce a flood dragon Dan. In addition, this Inky Flood Dragon is a vile, water attribute Inky Flood Dragon, so its inner Dan should be blue! Let me touch it and see what exactly is going on?” After gazing at it for some time, the young woman finally could not endure it anymore and took the soft, velvety, sphere from Han Li’s head, stroking it a few times.

But at this time, with a “pu”, the sphere actually burst open on its own for no reason, and a large cloud of red smoke immediately shrouded Han Li and the young woman within it.

Chapter 208: Joyous Meeting

Han Li felt that he was having an incredibly marvelous, erotic dream; the person with him in the dream had a burning passion, but he could never clearly see the face of the peerless beauty

But even if the erotic dream were better, there would always be a time when he would wake up. Han Li, after an unknown period of time, finally awoke from his glamorous dream.

But as soon as he opened his eyes, what he saw was a gorgeous, peerless face and a pair of snow-like cold pupils. This beautiful face was both unfamiliar yet familiar at the same time, causing Han Li's heart to thump once,

"You woke up!" said the eighteen or nineteen year-old woman indifferently, her voice containing no trace of affection. This caused a slight chill to rise from Han Li's back when he heard it.

Speaking of a chill, Han Li discovered that his entire naked body was tightly embracing a similarly naked beautiful woman. The woman's face was first crimson, but immediately her sleek eyebrows rose vertically, and her jade-like face frosted over. She coldly spat out:

"Have you had enough! Take your dog paws off of me and let me go right now!"

Started, Han Li instinctively retrieved both of his hands, letting go of this woman.

This great beauty, seeing that Han Li had let go of herself, hurriedly used one hand to push herself off the ground. Her eye-catching, curved body immediately stood up from Han Li's chest.

But just as the extremely beautiful young woman's slender waist had straightened, she yelled out, her flowery face losing its color with pain. Her body shook once, and then she fell again into Han Li's chest, causing Han Li to again experience the feeling of soft jade covering his torso.

Han Li did not consider himself to be a base person, but he definitely did not consider himself to be a person with noble character.

So when this beautiful woman had thrown herself into his arms, he regained his focus and immediately rode his hands up, pressing the woman up against his body. Then, he gently kissed the woman's tender, alluring lips, causing the words that the woman had wanted to berate Han Li with to be forcibly shocked away. Underneath Han Li's hot kisses, her slender eyebrows slowly smoothed out, and she began to fall into a trance.

What followed was a case of "when conditions are right, success will naturally follow"!

Han Li and the young woman wordlessly enjoyed the taste of ecstasy between a man and a woman once again. This, compared to the experience they had when the two of them were in a state of semi-consciousness, caused them to become even more intoxicated

and made them even more crazy and forgetful!

Today, the beautiful woman's two eyes were tightly pressed up against Han Li's chest, her two cheeks flushed red, her chest rising and falling indefinitely. Evidently, she had yet to awaken from the greatest stimulus. Han Li embraced this beautiful woman with one hand, and the other hand was incessantly fondling the woman's round and well-developed area with a desire to continue.

After an unknown amount of time, the gorgeous woman's breathing finally stabilized, and her expression had finally returned to normal. She slowly opened her eyes.

This time she didn't say a single sentence to Han Li, immediately pushing aside Han Li's mischief-causing hand from her body. She stood up with a bleak expression and walked towards a nearby storage pouch. Han Li slightly started, but after a moment of hesitation, he did not obstruct this woman.

The young woman retrieved a set of snow-white garments from the storage pouch and gently put them on. Not too long afterwards, she finished getting dressed, causing her entire temperament to change in an instant; she began to appear graceful and poised. At this time, she turned her head around to glance at Han Li, then stared blankly for a moment!

This was because Han Li had long since stood, neatly clothed, not too far behind her. He was currently gazing at her with an admiring and tender gaze, causing this woman's state of mind to stir. A trace of a strange feeling crept into her heart.

“You should be very clear about what kind of person I am! The things that happened between us were only mistakes! Just pretend it was all a dream!” the young woman said faintly, gently curling her sleek hair.

“I know!” Han Li answered peacefully after a moment of silence, rubbing his nose.

“If a third person finds out what happened today, I will kill you!” the young woman suddenly stated in a cold tone.

“I will not breathe a word. If this matter travels to the outside world, you can just kill me!” Han Li warmly responded with a faint smile.

“Hmph! As long as you know!” Seeing that Han Li agreed instantly, the woman did not actually feel happy in her heart; in fact, she began to feel somewhat vexed, and her tone became even more vile.

After saying this, the woman and Han Li remained silent in a stalemate for some time; neither of them uttered another sentence.

Although the woman was a Core Formation cultivator, she had always spent her time cultivating as a child; as for the affairs between males and females, she was not much different from normal young women. Thus, although she had instinctively forced Han Li to not transmit this matter to the outside world, her thoughts were still in turmoil, unsure of how to face this matter.

Han Li was not much better than the woman; he had never expected that his first intimate relationship with a woman would actually be with a female Core Formation cultivator. In addition, it was with this kind of a peerless talent and beautiful person, completely different from the sweet-tempered, pretty daughter from a humble family that he had imagined. This caused him to laugh bitterly. Would this one-night affair be a blessing or a curse to him?

But regardless of what it would be, Han Li had already seen that the woman did not harbor the malevolent idea of killing him to silence him, causing him to let out a sigh of relief. Many favorable impressions spawned towards this great beauty with whom he had already experienced the affairs of a husband and wife. But these were only favorable impressions; if the other person still wanted to become hostile and make a move, Han Li decided that he would not resign himself to death!

“What exactly was that sphere? How could it cause you and me to.....” Han Li was the first to open his mouth, but after saying half of the sentence, he did not continue; however, he trusted that the other person would be able to understand his meaning.

“That was the Inky Flood Dragon’s prostate capsule; I didn’t expect that this beast actually was a very rarely seen male flood dragon, and I actually carelessly forgot this matter! This capsule contains an aphrodisiacal fog; when it contacts any female, it will immediately erupt.”

“So it was like that!”

Hearing this, Han Li was finally enlightened! The riddle in his heart was finally resolved.

“Then your current appearance, why is it different from before.....”

“I practice a sect-unique cultivation technique, the Silk Woman Reincarnation Technique. This magic technique, although somewhat strange, can allow a person to remain perpetually young. Every ten years, this magic technique will cycle through once. My magic strength would have gone through the cycle, and I thus naturally would have restored my young appearance. But after what happened between you and me, this technique was temporarily broken, so I got a little older!” the young woman explained casually after a moment of silence.

“Then you won’t have any troubles, right?” Han Li didn’t know why he couldn’t help but ask this question.

“It’s not a problem. My magic technique is already a great success; even if my virginity has been broken, I will only lose five to six years of magic power; this to me does not count for much!” said the woman coldly, glancing at Han Li with a complicated expression.

Hearing this, Han Li became silent. He knew that the other person’s heart still contained a significant amount of resentment towards losing her virginity. He could only remain silent and face it!

This woman truly felt that she had been extremely wronged!

She had just then secretly sized up the other person a few times and had confirmed once again that this Yellow Maple Valley disciple was truly completely average, whether in terms of appearance or natural talent. And she had actually done things that should only be done between a husband and wife with this person. How could this not cause her, who had always been proud and arrogant, to feel incredibly dejected!

But she was also somewhat reluctant of the idea of killing this person to relieve the hatred in her heart. After all, the other person was the male who had taken away her virginity, and she inevitably had a few strange feelings towards this person. This caused her to feel both anger and hatred!

“What time is it now? It shouldn’t have passed the time limit of five days, right?” Han Li couldn’t help but ask after suddenly recalling something.

Upon hearing this, the woman, whose state of mind was already unstable, felt an abrupt fright spring up in her heart, but immediately afterwards, she calmed down and said calmly:

“It shouldn’t have been that long. The sedative contained in the Inky Flood Dragon’s aphrodisiacal smoke should be very low in concentration! At most, we were unconscious for five to six hours.”

“But if we want to leave, we also must make our preparations

now; this dangerous area is not so easy to exit from,” added the woman, knitting her eyebrows.

“However, before all of that, you have no opinions on me taking this treasure chest, right?!” inquired the young woman as she glanced coldly at Han Li, her almond lips opening slightly.

Hearing this, Han Li bitterly laughed; although at the moment he could not sense the depth of that woman’s magic power, it was definitely above the Foundation Establishment stage. How could he dare to fight with her over the treasure chest!

The woman, seeing that Han Li did not utter a word, coldly smiled and leaped towards the white jade pavilion. In the end, she very smoothly retrieved the golden chest into her storage pouch, then flew back to Han Li’s side.

“Those spiritual medicines……!” Seeing that the woman had not harvested those spiritual medicines, Han Li stammered, somewhat baffled.

“I have no need of them; if you like them, you can harvest them all!” The woman glanced at Han Li and said without geniality after hearing this.

Hearing these words, Han Li became very happy in his heart. He had just been worrying that, after exiting the forbidden area, he would not have enough spiritual medicines to turn in to his sect and would seem suspicious to others! Thus, he unhesitatingly immediately flew over, and in the time it took to roll one’s eyes he

retrieved tens of spiritual medicines.

The woman stood in the same spot and coldly watched Han Li's movements without making a sound. Only after Han Li harvested the medicines and return, did she slowly and solemnly say, "To break free from this place requires cooperation between the two of us; we cannot successfully leave this place if one of us is missing..."

Chapter 209: Return

Inside the large stone temple hall, the sound of rumbling continued to echo. The Masked Moon Sect disciples were strenuously using magic tools, smashing open a large tunnel many meters deep. However, regardless of what magic tool stuck inside the stone tunnel, they could only pound away a chunk of rock about an inch wide. This caused everyone to become even more discouraged as they pounded away.

After several hours, all of the disciples blankly sat on the ground and wordlessly looked at the large hole as if they were all lifeless. As of this moment, they had wanted to rescue their Martial Ancestor, but they didn't hold the slightest confidence in doing so! All of them started to think about the fearsome consequences of losing their Martial Ancestor and started to think of their path to escape.

Right at this moment, a large sound came from outside the stone hall, and the earth rumbled for a moment more, as if there was a tremendous battle occurring outside. This caused the disciples to be faintly surprised.

“What’s going on?” A few disciples looked at each other in dismay. Two male disciples immediately exited the stone hall with quick steps to see what was happening.

“Martial Ancestor!”

Soon, the sound of great rejoice came from the disciples outside

the hall. Although these loud noises were clearly heard by disciples inside the stone hall, they could not help but look at each other in shock and immediately charge out like a hornet's nest.

Over thirty meters away from the hall entrance, there was a large hole several meters wide. Nearby, there was a remarkably beautiful woman wearing fluttering white clothes. From her appearance, it truly seemed she was the young female Martial Ancestor. At this moment, the Masked Moon Sect Martial Ancestor coldly looked at the distance with an expression of indifference, completely ignoring the two male disciples who were standing behind her.

This immediately jolted the originally wildly happy disciples, as if cold water had been poured on their heads.

“Could it be this Martial Ancestor intends to investigate and stir up the restrictive formation?”

With this thought, all of the disciples could not help but look at the two dainty female disciples at the center, causing these women's complexion to become deathly white and tremble with fear!

After the white-clothed woman fully surveyed the area for a quarter of an hour, she slowly turned her head to look at the many disciples behind her. She coldly ordered:

“Set off!”

.....

Just as Han Li was flying from tree to tree with a body as agile as a monkey, he hurried off the mountain with a speed not inferior to the Imperial Flight Technique.

Currently, his body was surging with spiritual power. His body actually contained magic power of the thirteenth layer. Han Li felt a bit infatuated with this fantastic feeling of greatly increased magic power. However, he was unable to persistently release this great amount of spiritual power for a long period of time. He estimated that there were still several hours left before this disappeared.

In order to leave the underground swamp, that woman had reason to cooperate with him and used some kind of secret magic to temporarily send a portion of the restriction spell's magic power to Han Li, causing Han Li's originally eleventh layer power to ascend to the peak of Qi Condensation.

Then the two used a Pearl Swallow Ring and a Golden Light Brick treasure talisman to forcibly break open a tunnel from underground to the surface.

During these course of events, whenever Han Li's magic power was exhausted the woman silently transmitted more magic power toward Han Li. As a result, when the two were able to leave from underground, Han Li had completely exhausted the Golden Light Brick treasure talisman and turned it to waste paper, whereas the young woman had used up twenty to thirty years of cultivated power. These losses couldn't be considered anything but

disastrous!

With this said, the woman's Silk Woman Reincarnation Technique was truly strange!

Within the reincarnation cycle, she was able to transmit the restrictive spell's magic power to another male but was unable to remove the restriction off herself and pass it onto a female. Furthermore, the magic power that could be transmitted was limited to the cultivation of the male. As Han Li was only at Qi Condensation, the amount of magic power he could contain was the thirteenth layer of his foundation cultivation technique. It was impossible for him to enter the realm of Foundation Establishment.

Because Han Li had just received magic power from the woman prior to breaking their way to the surface and separating, he still had the magic power of thirteenth layer cultivation for the moment, allowing him to experience this wondrous sensation a while longer.

“Nangong Wan.”

In his heart, Han Li softly said this. Just as Han Li was about to depart from the woman, he asked for her name.

However, when Han Li thought of how the woman begrudgingly told him, he grew a bit sad!

He clearly understood without saying that he was a Qi Condensation disciple. Even if he were to enter Foundation Establishment, it would be impossible for them to have any sort of relationship. After all, their positions in the cultivation world and their lifespans were truly as different as heaven and earth. As a result, he could only bitterly accept the woman's heartlessness during their departure.

Han Li understood himself well. He knew that if he entered Foundation Establishment, he would have a slight chance. But currently, he could only look upward to her. With the great size of Yellow Maple Valley, there were over ten thousand cultivators, but only a trifling few were able to reach Core Formation. Han Li, knowing that his aptitude was lacking, didn't even have the slightest of confidence.

Just as Han Li was thinking this, his expression suddenly grew dark. Woosh. His body suddenly disappeared into the air. A few moments later, however, his body appeared where he originally was, but now he was holding a storage pouch. At this time, the headless corpse of a Spirit Beast Mountain disciple fell off a nearby large tree.

Han Li lightly swept through the things inside the storage pouch and lightly shook his head. He then leaped and departed.

.....

The afternoon of the fifth day after the forbidden area was opened, the many individuals from various sects waiting outside the forbidden area for quite a long time finally moved. The seven

Core Formation cultivators strenuously opened the entrance once again. They then looked at the dark passage, waiting for the first of ones to appear with serene expressions.

It was very clear that breaking the magic barrier was far easier than it was five days ago. Furthermore, when the passage appeared, the seven Core Formation experts put away their magic treasures, but the passage actually didn't disappear, maintaining a steady connection to the forbidden area.

Behind the seven, there were several tens of Foundation Establishment leaders with someone nervous expressions. This was related to the next distribution of Foundation Establishment Pills, so this event was quite important to these stewards.

As for the Masked Moon Sect's "eccentric Senior Qiong", it was unknown when he appeared on the large rock nearby, but he was watching the several people with glee. When he saw those he made a bet with, his gaze became rather peculiar.

After half an hour after the passage opened, a middle-aged Daoist Priest with a calm expression walked out. His clothes were lined with ash and dirt and had several notable holes and bloodstains. It seemed that he had left the forbidden area after fighting a bitter battle.

After the middle-aged Daoist Priest appeared, he saluted the Clear Void Sect's Core Formation cultivator and quietly sat down cross-legged to the side.

When the Core Formation cultivator saw this, he looked at the middle-aged Daoist Priest with a smile and lightly nodded his head repeatedly.

Martial Ancestor Li's expression was peaceful, without the slightest of emotion, but eccentric Senior Qiong rolled his eyes and gave a dissatisfied snort.

The next to walk out from the passage were a feminine man from Saber Transformation Dock; Zhong Wu, the ugly man from Spirit Beast Mountain; a blue-clothed youth from Heavenly Imperial Fortress; and Yellow Maple Valley's Chen siblings, along with other disciples. All of them more or less had traces of injury. Every one of them walked to their sect elders' location with expressions of exhaustion and sat down cross-legged to rest.

After the time it took to eat a meal, another large batch of disciples walked out. This group of people were different from the loners who had previously emerged. They were all in groups of twos and threes. Furthermore, every person's face had greatly varying expressions. There were those who were greatly joyful, those who were completely dispirited, and those who had an expression of great relief.

Adding this group of people to the several that arrived before, more than twenty of the seven sects' disciples had already returned. However, they still didn't see a single person from the Masked Moon Sect. This caused the other six sects to wear an expression of astonishment. However, eccentric Senior Qiong's expression along with Fairy Ni Chang and the rest of those from the Masked Moon Sect did not change in the slightest, as if they

had a card up their sleeve.

After another hour passed by; aside from two disciples who appeared, there were no other traces of those from the Masked Moon Sect. There were still only two hours left before the passage closed. At this moment, eccentric Senior Qiong and Fairy Ni Chang glanced at each other, slightly revealing an expression of unease.

The appearance of a person suddenly flashed at the passage entrance. A youth from Yellow Maple Valley appeared. This person had a common appearance with neat clothes, and hurried on his way, having the appearance of an unstoppable thunderbolt killing several people in succession. This person was Han Li.

When the Masked Moon Sect members saw the image of a person at the passage entrance, their faces wore an expression of joy. But when they clearly saw that it was someone from Yellow Maple Valley, they immediately became greatly disappointed.

At this moment, Han Li took a look at the surrounding situation and slowly walked to his sect's position. He copied the others and sat in formation. Coincidentally, he happened to sit next to the Chen siblings.

It appeared that compared to the other six sects, Yellow Maple Valley disciples numbered the greatest among those who left the forbidden area alive!

Apart from Brother and Sister Chen, there were also the old man as well as the youth. With the addition of Han Li, there were

actually five. Compared to the three to four survivors from the other sects, especially the trifling two from the Giant Sword Sect, It could be considered much greater in number! This caused Martial Ancestor Li to be unable to conceal the joy in his heart as he wore a spring wind on his face.

When the Chen siblings and the other two saw that Han Li, an eleventh layer disciple, was actually able to leave the forbidden area completely intact and without injury, they could not help but show an expression of amazement. However, as if they immediately thought of something, they looked at Han Li with a gaze of contempt and did not pay further attention to him.

Obviously, they all believed that Han Li was a coward, concealing himself and hiding from battle. He certainly harvested nothing.

As the time for the passage to close grew closer, those from Masked Moon Sect appeared one by one. This caused eccentric Senior Qiong and Fairy Ni Chang to be unable to sit still with an expression of unmistakable worry on their faces. This caused Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest at the side to become secretly delighted. It seemed the Masked Moon Sect truly had a mishap.

Han Li, who saw all of this, wrinkled his brow and felt a bit of surprise. He definitely escaped from the underground swamp with Nangong Wan. Why did the others from the Masked moon Sect not yet appear? He could not help but be a bit worried about that woman!

Chapter 210: The Gambling Game

Han Li suddenly thought of the other young woman that he had encountered inside the forbidden area and couldn't help but glance in the direction of Spirit Beast Mountain. In the end, he discovered that Han Yunzhi was cutely sitting cross-legged on the ground, her expression very even. There did not seem to be anything unexpected, causing Han Li to let out a sigh of relief.

Near the closed tunnel entrance, the expressions of the few people from the Masked Moon Sect became uglier and uglier to look at.

As for the people from the other sects, although they outwardly appeared to be anxious for the Masked Moon Sect disciples, in reality there were so many happy flowers blossoming in their hearts. After all, the Masked Moon Sect, being the State of Yue's number one great sect, had long attracted the jealousy of other people. These few people were naturally happy to see an opportunity to weaken its power.

One did not know if those people's thoughts were actually counter-productive; when the passageway was only a quarter hour away from closing, a white shadow flashed within the passageway, and a group of ten or so Masked Moon Sect disciples walked out in an orderly fashion. Their leader was that extremely alluring beauty Nangong.

Seeing them walk out, the eccentric Senior Qiong's reaction was acceptable, only letting out a long sigh. That Fairy Ni Chang couldn't help but pounce on her, tugging on the arm of the beauty

Nangong. She began to ask her questions with extreme concern, her face revealing an expression of anxiety.

Seeing the scene unfolding in front of their eyes, the people from the other sects felt a wave of doubt!

This was not unexpected; the beauty Nangong, although she had met with these Core Formation cultivators a few times, had for a long time worn a veil and had never revealed her true appearance. Thus, these people did not actually know that the beautiful, flowery young woman in front of them was actually the “Fairy Nangong” that they had interacted with numerous times.

Seeing this woman had safely exited, Han Li was also very pleased. After all, the other person was the first woman that he had experienced a joining of bodies with in this lifetime. Even if he clearly knew that there was no way to continue their relationship, in his heart he still couldn't help but worry about her.

However, the smiles on Martial Ancestor Li and the Daoist Priest's face had become somewhat forced. This was not unexpected; ignoring how many spiritual medicines the Masked Moon Sect had harvested, even the number of people that had walked out of forbidden area alive had surpassed the combined numbers of the people from their two sects. How could this not cause the two of them to be extremely depressed!

“It seems like all of the disciples should have emerged; the ones who didn't leave.....,” muttered the leader of the Spirit Beast Mountain, clearing his throat.

But before he had finished his sentence, a person came scrambling out of the tunnel that was just about to close. It was actually that old, crafty Xiang Zhili from Yellow Maple Valley; only, the Giant Sword Sect and the young Daoist Priest originally harvesting the spiritual medicines with him had disappeared without a trace.

The old man had just crawled out of the passageway when thunderous vibrations came from the direction of the forbidden area; next, an azure light flashed, and the passageway fragmented, finally disappearing completely.

At this time, even if there were still people inside the forbidden area who had yet to come out, it would only be a dead end for them. This was because any disciple who had not exited in time in the past never appeared again even at the next opening of the forbidden area. They had all disappeared for an unclear reason, and this was also the reason why other people were not willing to waste time.

However, the fact that this old, crafty Yellow Maple Valley disciple with the strength of a tenth layer cultivator could actually escape with his life at the very end was truly outside the expectations of these experts. They couldn't help but size up Xiang Zhili a few times.

“Brother Li, I didn't expect that your esteemed valley actually had so many talents! Not only eleventh layer cultivators could walk out of the forbidden area, even tenth-layer strength disciples can preserve their lives and exit. Your esteemed sect truly uses the

correct method of teaching your disciples, I am truly in admiration!” Seeing that only two people from his sect had left the forbidden area, and that the barefooted male whom he had high hopes for had not come out while two low-level disciples from the Yellow Maple Valley had come out and preserved their own small lives, the cultivator from the Giant Sword Sect couldn’t help but feel his anger rise. He said these two sentences mockingly.

When Martial Ancestor Li heard this, his face fell. He also reckoned that Han Li and Xiang Zhili had both stayed in hiding and did not reveal themselves, wanting to seize any opportunity available. He could not help but bitterly glare at the old, crafty man, but he still had no choice but to protect the two of them with his words:

“The cultivation technique of these juniors is too superficial. Being able to preserve their own lives can also be considered to be their own good fortune; as for what method they used, the others and I, as their senior generation, have no need to add on any blame!”

“Hmph!”

The Giant Sword Sect expert, seeing Martial Ancestor Li put on such an act, found it extremely objectionable and wanted to say something else. However, eccentric Senior Qiong opened his mouth, somewhat impatiently.

“What is there for you two to argue about? Since the person could survive, this is the skill of the junior generation; do you want them to stubbornly charge forwards even if they clearly know it is

impossible! However, little fellow Li! Quickly examine the results of the bet. The earlier we know, the earlier our hearts will be at ease; do you want the elderly me to wait here for even longer?”

This old man was clearly taking advantage of his age, but Martial Ancestor Li and the man from the Giant Sword Sect actually really did not dare to make this person unhappy. They could only glance at each other before laughing the matter off. Otherwise, if this old freak started holding a grudge against them, they would have some really bad luck!

Thus, under eccentric Senior Qiong’s urging, Fu Yunzi of the Clear Void Sect and Martial Ancestor Li could only pinch their noses and move closer to him. Then, each of the disciples from the three sects that had come out of the forbidden area individually displayed the harvest that they had in order to determine the winner and loser of the bet!

The Clear Void Sect’s Daoist Priests who had walked out from the forbidden area were only four in number. However, when the middle-aged Daoist Priest that had been the first to walk out of the forbidden area brought out his spiritual medicines, the faces of all the people present changed slightly.

“Fully mature three hundred year-old Blood Blue Pearls, two three hundred-year-old Sky Spirit Fruits, three four hundred-year-old Chalcedony Mushrooms…….”

The Daoist Priest brought out eleven or twelve spiritual medicines in a row, individually placing them on the ground. The quantity was extremely high, greatly astonishing the surrounding

people. Only Fu Yunzi, who had made the bet, was lightly smiling with content, as if he was very satisfied by the stunned looks of the others.

Not only that, the spiritual medicines that the elders from Yellow Maple Valley and the male Masked Moon Sect disciples had placed earlier were far less, each person merely placing a few herbs.

Next, the harvest of the second Daoist Priest was finally not as excessive, but there were still seven or eight spiritual medicines, significantly greater than harvests under normal circumstances! This caused Martial Ancestor to begin to feel unsettled, and eccentric Senior Qiong's look of laughter was also retrieved; he became serious for the first time.

Hearing of the matter concerning the bet, the experts from the other four sects naturally became interested and individually came forward to take a look. When they saw this scene, they also quietly considered it amazing!

However, the spiritual medicines of the Chen family brother and sister pair after them finally allowed Martial Ancestor Li to be somewhat delighted, since their combined harvest neared twenty herbs, already roughly the same as those two Daoist Priests. The next Clear Void Sect disciple's harvest was finally normal, only four herbs.

As for the Masked Moon Sect disciples, they maintained an average quantity; three people in a row had five or under herbs, causing the Daoist Priest and Martial Ancestor Li to quietly sigh in relief.

However, the next youth from Yellow Maple Valley to place his spiritual medicines delayed for a few moments; with great shame he only pulled out three spiritual medicines. This caused Martial Ancestor Li to become so angry that his nose almost became crooked. He almost opened his mouth to berate him. This was because he did not have any belief that Han Li or the crafty old man could contribute much!

According to sequence, it should have been Han Li's turn to go forwards, but who knew that crafty Xiang, with a stride, would grab the place in front of Han Li, respectfully pulling out two Purple Monkey Flowers. This caused Martial Ancestor Li to feel great surprise, and his expression instantly became somewhat more pleasant; however, it was merely somewhat more! Although he had one or two more spiritual medicines than the Clear Void Sect in front of him, as long as the other side's last individual could bring out a normal amount of spiritual medicines, he would definitely lose. He had absolutely no hope that Han Li's harvest would be too large, reckoning that Han Li at most would be like the crafty old man. Throwing two or three spiritual medicines would already be not too bad, and it could be considered the due diligence of these lower-level disciples.

Thinking to this point, Martial Ancestor Li couldn't help but glance at Fu Yunzi, only to see the other person's restless appearance; he was also currently glancing at him. The two of them slightly started, then immediately averted their gazes, continuing to closely follow the gambling game.

The last Daoist Priest to step forward was a white-haired elderly man. When he walked to the front, he calmly brought out one herb

after another; his slow dilly-dallying manner caused all of the people to continuously roll their eyes.

However, when he had pulled out five spiritual medicines in a row and was still reaching into his storage pouch, Martial Ancestor Li's expression instantly sank, while Fu Yunzi began to beam with joy. As for the Masked Moon Sect disciples, those two people were unable to endure anymore and walked over, expressing their interest.

Greatly beyond any expectations, this last white-haired Daoist Priest actually pulled out seven spiritual medicines in a row, causing all of the onlookers to feel greatly surprised.

When Martial Ancestor Li saw this, his expression had already become incredibly ashen, while the Daoist Priest excitedly turned his attention to the other Masked Moon Sect disciples, reckoning that his victory over the Yellow Maple Valley was already secure.

At this time, Han Li stepped forward. Other people only indifferently glanced at him before returning their gazes to the Masked Moon Sect, completely ignoring him.

Martial Ancestor Li also saw this scene, but he similarly did not glance at Han Li at all, reckoning that he had already lost his opportunity to make a comeback. This eleventh layer disciple's appearance would only be to make a fool of himself; thus, he naturally would not give Han Li any face.

Han Li did not pay attention to the movements of other people,

and even more didn't have the idea of saving some ripe spiritual medicines and bringing out less.

This was because each sect's ranks contained two other stewards, who had one or two smelling spiritual beasts by their sides. These kinds of squirrel-like strange beasts could smell out any hidden hundred-year-old or above spiritual medicines from a distance of thirty feet. Even if they were inside a storage pouch, they could not escape notice.

Thus, every disciple that exited the forbidden area, after voluntarily turning in all of their spiritual medicines, also had to be smelled by these small beasts once over before being allowed to leave. This was to prevent against disciples with malicious plans to smuggle a secret stash of spiritual medicines!

Arriving at the location, Han Li held a storage pouch in his hand that he had prepared a long time ago. Then, he rudely flipped his hand, dropping it on the table. After a burst of white light, a huge pile of roughly twenty or so multicolored spiritual medicines formed a huge pile on the ground.

Chapter 211: The Winner

“Quick, look over there!”

“This is?”

“I don’t dare to believe it!”

When this pile of spiritual medicines suddenly appeared on the ground, a few sharp-eyed individuals began to cry out in surprise!

These few yells immediately attracted the gazes of other people; of course, Martial Ancestor Li and Fu Yunzi were included in this group.

However, when the two people saw clearly the spiritual medicines at Han Li’s feet, the Daoist Priest’s grin immediately froze, while Martial Ancestor Li, after staring blankly for a moment, began to laugh loudly with pleasant surprise. This big pie that fell from the sky caused his heart to burst with joy.

After Martial Ancestor Li had realized his own loss of self control and stopped laughing, he stared at Han Li with a beaming gaze, assessing him constantly; how come when he looked at Han Li, he felt that Han Li was very pleasing? On the other hand, the Daoist Priest’s face had become ashen, still unable to believe that he had lost just like that; naturally, his gaze towards Han Li held great unhappiness.

“Daoist brother, this is done! Do you still want to trouble a member of the junior generation?” Martial Ancestor Li humphed after glancing at Fu Yunzi’s expression. He took a stride and blocked in front of Han Li, saying this with a straight face.

Today, Han Li had just helped him with a great service; he naturally could not allow this member of the junior generation to be frightened by Fu Yunzi in front of this many people. Otherwise, his face would be entirely gone.

The Daoist Priest, being scolded by Martial Ancestor Li like this, realized that given his own identity, glaring at a Qi Condensation disciple in this way was incredibly wrong. Other people would mistakenly believe he was trying to secretly retaliate against a member of the junior generation, so he hurriedly averted his gaze towards Martial Ancestor Li and forced a laugh:

“Martial Ancestor Li, it’s a misunderstanding. This Daoist Priest was only thinking that based on this young man’s cultivation base, it is truly inconceivable that he would be able to harvest so many spiritual medicines; I was only taking a few extra glances at him!”

The Daoist Priest made a huge effort to put on a nonchalant appearance, but as soon as he thought about that flood dragon inner Dan, he felt his heart bleed incessantly, and his expression had no way of returning to normal.

Martial Ancestor Li coldly laughed twice and noncommittally did not continue to speak. After all, he had achieved a great victory in today’s bet and was unwilling to continue to provoke the other person.

However, he was also somewhat suspicious of Han Li's ability to obtain so many spiritual medicines, but in front of so many people from other sects, Martial Ancestor Li was unwilling to interrogate Han Li now and could only turn a blind eye to it. Not to mention, at this moment his heart was on fire; as long as he could triumph again over the Masked Moon Sect people, he really would have made it big on this expedition to the forbidden area. Naturally, he could not deal with these trivial matters. As long as he could win this gambling game, he couldn't care less about what stealing methods Han Li used to get the spiritual medicines.

The Daoist Priest, seeing Martial Ancestor Li's appearance, naturally realized the other person's thoughts. Could he, as the eliminated participant, only continue to observe who won between eccentric Senior Qiong and the other person with an angry heartache?

But eccentric Senior Qiong's expression was not much better than that of the Daoist Priest. The spiritual medicines that the few Masked Moon Sect disciples had turned in were all common, truly causing him to be unable to laugh.

Just as Martial Ancestor Li was in high spirits, the situation suddenly took a rapid turn. The quantities of spiritual medicines that the last few Masked Moon Sect disciples turned in suddenly all reached ten or so in number, in an instant surpassing even the sum of the Yellow Maple Valley's and Clear Void Sect's harvest by five or six herbs, winning the last round of the bet.

This turn of events immediately knocked Martial Ancestor Li

into a stupor, while eccentric Senior Qiong let out a long sigh of relief and began to laugh strangely.

“Bring it, bring it, turn over that demonic flood dragon inner Dan! I was just wanting to refine a furnace of good pills, and this inner Dan is the best medicinal catalyst!” Eccentric Senior Qiong impolitely demanded his betting spoils from Fu Yunzi on the spot .

Upon hearing this, the Daoist Priest Fu Yunzi forced a smile and opened his mouth, as if he wanted to say something, but nothing came out of his mouth.

Seeing this, eccentric Senior Qiong glared unhappily.

“What, the well-renowned Clear Void Sect’s Fu Yunzi, could it be that you want to renege on this debt?”

“Reneged on this debt? Do I dare to renege on a debt with eccentric Senior Qiong?”

Fu Yunzi naturally did not really mean to renege on the inner Dan. It was only that the loss of this kind of precious item hurt him greatly, and he was instinctively reluctant to part with it.

But today, now that eccentric Senior Qiong said it like that, his face alternated between red and white. After fiercely stomping his foot, he tossed a white sphere to the other person, then turned away with an expression of physical pain written on his face, unwilling to look. That sphere was the inner Dan of a demonic

flood dragon.

Eccentric Senior Qiong grabbed the inner Dan with a raise of his hand. After closely inspecting it, he beamed with joy, but he still muttered:

“It seems that its quality is not too good, and its spiritual Qi is not really sufficient. It looks like it’s just passable; I’ll have to make do with it!”

This sentence caused the Daoist Priest’s face to turn red when he heard it. He almost vomited blood and died with anger, and he hurriedly departed from this individual to a faraway place, lest his Dao heart die from depression.

“Daoist friend Li, you.....”

“Li will send representatives with two chunks of iron essence within twenty years!”

“Hehe! It’s still Daoist friend Li that is straightforward. I have nothing else to say!” Eccentric Senior Qiong nodded his head with satisfaction, then returned to the Masked Moon Sect’s side, very pleased with himself.

This round of gambling had many twist and turns, truly causing the various bystanders from different sects to feel very amazed. In the end, seeing Martial Ancestor Li and Fu Yunzi’s attempts to try to steal a chicken only to end up losing the rice used to lure it,

everyone gloated. Who told them to gamble with this eccentric Senior Qiong anyways!

No matter what, this time's expedition to the forbidden area had ended.

The leaders of the various sects, having received all of their own disciples' spiritual medicines and letting them be checked by the spiritual beasts once, all said their goodbyes one by one and left, bringing their followers with them.

Those from the Masked Moon Sect were the first to leave, and so after they had said goodbye and stepped onto the Heavenly Moon Divine Boat one after the other, Han Li couldn't help but glance at the Fairy Nangong in their midst. However, that woman, from boarding the boat to its eventual departure, never did glance back at him, causing Han Li to feel wronged in his heart.

However, Han Li could also be considered a person with a strong state of mind, and in no time he had recovered to normal and continued to watch the other sects leave.

When she was leaving with the Spirit Beast Mountain disciples, Han Yunzhi glanced at Han Li and gave him a benevolent smile. This actually caused Han Li to feel somewhat warm in his heart.

Yellow Maple Valley, as the host of the forbidden area, naturally would have to be the last to leave. Thus, when the other six sects all left, only the Yellow Maple Valley sect remained all alone outside of the forbidden area.

However, Martial Ancestor Li didn't just take his followers and leave; instead, he raised his head and gazed in the direction of the forbidden area silently. However, all the other people knew that this Martial Ancestor, having just lost a bet, could not be happy in his heart. Thus, nobody ignorantly went up to urge him on; they could only stand and watch behind him.

After half a day, Martial Ancestor's mood seemed to be somewhat better; although he did not turn around, he finally opened his mouth. His first sentence was directed at Han Li.

“The disciple that turned in the most spiritual medicines, what is your name and how many years has it been since you entered the valley?”

When the other people heard this, they couldn't help but reveal an expression of envy; to have one's name known by this high-ranking Martial Ancestor meant that in the future one would definitely have great benefits. Han Li started slightly and, not daring to delay, immediately said with respect:

“Named Han Li, this disciple entered the valley nearly three years ago!”

“Han Li?”

Martial Ancestor Li slowly repeated Han Li's name, as if he were considering something. He didn't actually reply immediately; instead, he caused all the people behind him to turn and look at

each other. They didn't know what this Martial Ancestor Elder's intention was! But Martial Ancestor Li's next sentence caused Han Li's heart to shiver, and he raised 120% of his attention.

“Han Li, tell me the process that you went through to obtain these spiritual medicines, I want to hear it!” asked Martial Ancestor Li, seemingly arbitrarily.

Although Han Li was alert in his heart, he had long before made preparations for being interrogated by others concerning this matter. Thus, he was not panicked. He calmly said:

“Yes, Martial Ancestor!”

“This matter is actually very much due to a fluke! On that day, although disciple had hidden in the ring-shaped mountain, regrettably no real rewards were to be had. However, on the afternoon on the fourth day, disciple actually found two people fighting over a few sprigs of chalcedony within a very remote cave. One was the barefooted, silver-sword-carrying Giant Sword Sect disciple, and the other was a Heavenly Imperial Fortress person with scars covering his face. Disciple thus secretly hid in.”

.....”

Just like that, Han Li vividly began to describe a tale of taking advantage of the two people's conflict. In addition, he did his best to exaggerate his unexpected luck, causing the Chen brother and sister, as well as the other disciples, to feel incredibly jealous, their envious intent extremely apparent.

Martial Ancestor Li, upon hearing Han Li's account, silently nodded his head, feeling that only in this way could it possibly happen. Otherwise, how could a disciple with a low cultivation technique like Han Li possibly harvest so many spiritual medicines? It seemed like the other person truly was incredibly lucky and that it had been a complete coincidence.

Believing that he had figured out the story behind this matter, Martial Ancestor Li did not want to continue wasting time interrogating. However, after pausing for a while, he suddenly said to Han Li with a solemn expression:

“Han Li, your services towards the sect this time were not small! Although I did not win the bet, I must still reward you greatly. I plan to receive you under my tutelage, and you can be one of my few disciples. Are you are willing?”

Hearing this, Han Li instantly froze and didn't know how to respond for some time!

And when the other Yellow Maple Valley people heard this, they first received a great shock, then tenaciously glared at Han Li, revealing an expression of disbelief!

This was too inconceivable. They hadn't heard wrong, had they?! This Martial Ancestor Elder, would actually receive this person as a disciple so easily? This person, whether discussing qualifications or cultivation technique, was extremely average. One could truly not tell if this person had any qualities that stood out, allowing

him to be noticed by Martial Ancestor Li!

Chapter 212: A Sudden Understanding

Normally, a lower-layer cultivator being accepted by a Core Formation cultivator as a disciple would definitely be an extremely bizarre matter, a situation that one could not even dream about. However, when Han Li was in shock after he heard these words, he instinctively detected that something was not right.

Based on his aptitude and magic technique, how could this kind of a good fortune fall upon his shoulders? As for the explanation that it was a great reward for his supposed great services to Yellow Maple Valley, Han Li believed it even less. If this Martial Ancestor had won the bet and, in a moment of excitement, accepted him because of this success, it might have actually been somewhat sincere. But even though he had clearly lost in a total mess, he still wanted to accept him as a disciple; this was enough to make Han Li think!

While Han Li was running through all these mental gymnastics, Martial Ancestor Li began to become displeased.

When he had said that he would accept Han Li as his disciple, he originally thought that the other person would definitely be incomparably ecstatic and immediately agree readily. But who expected that Han Li actually stood blankly in the same spot, his expression one of amazement. He actually didn't immediately respond, which caused Martial Ancestor Li to feel somewhat resentful.

However, on the outside, Martial Ancestor Li naturally still had to maintain the poise of a Martial Ancestor, so he indifferently

said:

“Han Li, if you aren’t willing to take me as your master, you only need to clearly say it; I will not force you! I can separately bestow a few magic tools upon you as compensation!”

When Han Li heard this, he knew that although the other person’s words were pretty, he definitely was not happy in his heart. Han Li was very clear even without thinking hard what the consequences of offending this Martial Ancestor would be. In addition, for a Qi Condensation disciple like him to refuse a Core Formation cultivator’s acceptance of a disciple excessively defied common sense. Perhaps after he refused the offer, he would attract even more troubles.

Thinking to this point, he gritted his teeth. No matter what the other person’s attempts towards him were, he would first deal with the situation in front of him.

“Disciple is obviously delighted to be able to kowtow under Martial Ancestor’s tutelage, it is this disciple’s honor! Earlier it was just that disciple was too happy and completely forgot to speak; please forgive disciple, Martial Ancestor!” Han Li said with a hurried tone, his face blushing strongly as he pretended to regain his focus after being exhilarated.

Then, Han Li very tactfully kowtowed a few times to Martial Ancestor Li, immediately performing the ritual of formally becoming a disciple.

“Very good! From today onwards you are my, Li Huayuan’s, disciple; this Green Light Jade Blade magic tool can act as a greeting present.” A smiling, exuberant expression appeared on Li Huayuan’s face, and he reached his hand out to support Han Li. Then, he handed him a greenish-jade colored long blade. Judging from the spiritual light flickering on it, it definitely was a top-grade magic tool.

Han Li solemnly received the long blade with his two hands, then kowtowed again to express his respect before standing up again, pretending to be unable to contain his joy.

The other disciples watched dumbstruck, fires burning in their eyes. Their gazes towards Han Li were extremely peculiar, wishing that the person to receive the magic tool was themselves instead of Han Li, whom they had long considered to be unpleasant to their sight.

Although Han Li was unclear about the thoughts inside other people’s hearts, the provocative gazes individually landing on his body allowed him to roughly guess it, and he couldn’t help but bitterly laugh in his heart!

If it was possible, he actually hoped that the attention of this Martial Ancestor could have been placed on another person instead of himself, an unlucky bastard! One had to know that he still remembered very clearly the lesson he had learned from his previous master, Doctor Mo! Even better, today another master with even greater ability and many schemes had come; this caused Han Li to be speechless!”

“When after a period of time your Foundation Establishment succeeds, I will come take you to my place personally and receive you as an official disciple. It doesn’t matter if your Foundation Establishment has not yet occurred; I will also give you some pointers on your cultivation technique,” Martial Ancestor Li instructed Han Li.

“Yes, Master!” Han Li, naturally having no more opinions, very obediently complied.

“Okay, the time is not early, let’s return to Yellow Maple Valley!” declared Martial Ancestor Li after glancing at the color of the sky.

Next, everybody once again climbed onto Martial Ancestor Li’s silver python and, after a few days of flight, returned to Yellow Maple Valley.

As soon as they had entered the valley, Martial Ancestor Li Huayuan brought two stewards with him and went ahead to the official hall. The other people dissipated one by one, returning to their own homes, awaiting the prizes that would be awarded a few days later.

.....

Within a small cottage in the Yellow Maple Valley’s Hundred Medicine Garden, the little Senior Martial Uncle Ma opened his eyes wide, staring at Han Li as if he had seen a ghost. He muttered in his mouth nonstop:

“This is impossible; not only did you not die, you also picked up a leak in the forbidden area, turning in twenty or so spiritual medicines in an instant, and you were accepted by Martial Ancestor Li as an in-name disciple!”

“Yes, Senior Martial Uncle Ma! Isn’t my good fortune deep and my good luck stunning!” Han Li said, smiling yet not smiling, as he sat opposite the little old man as if he were very pleased.

The little old man’s facial expression returned to normal upon hearing Han Li’s words, but he began to gaze at Han Li with a strange expression in his eyes. His gaze caused Han Li to feel somewhat apprehensive, unsure of what the other person’s intentions were.

“Little fellow Han, your harvest from this time’s expedition to the forbidden area truly is not small. It has far exceeded all of my expectations!” said the little old man with a long sigh.

“I also did not expect it!” Han Li leisurely responded.

“But do you know the real purpose for why Junior Martial Uncle Li accepted you as an in-name disciple?”

(TL: The change in Martial Ancestor Li’s title here is mostly due to Senior Martial Uncle Ma’s seniority and status as compared to Martial Ancestor Li.)

The somewhat sympathetic tone revealed in the little old man’s

next sentence caused Han Li to jolt, but immediately after he began to rejoice. However, he was still strongly resisting the movements in his heart; he pretended to be confused and asked in astonishment:

“Senior Martial Uncle Ma, could it be that Martial Ancestor Li’s accepting of disciples has another reason?”

“Senior Martial Uncle? Hehe! Since Junior Martial Brother Han Li has already kowtowed to Junior Martial Uncle, you can just call me Senior Martial Brother Ma. I no longer dare to respond to the title Senior Martial Uncle!” said the little old man slowly and methodically, gently shaking his head.

“Cough! Why does Senior Martial Uncle Ma laugh at Junior Martial Nephew, who doesn’t know that seniority in the cultivation world is assigned by cultivation technique? As long as I have not yet entered the Foundation Establishment stage for one day, Senior Martial Uncle Ma is naturally still my senior,” said Han Li very sincerely, and immediately poured a cup of medicine flower tea for the little old man, handing it to the other person.

“Not bad, not bad! You indeed can be taught! It seems like you have not yet lost your wits because of this matter, so I will tell you now beforehand. In reality, even if I don’t say it, you will know in three to four more days,” said the little old man faintly, nodding his head in satisfaction.

Hearing this, Han Li was slightly startled, but he concentrated his attention on hearing the other person’s next utterance. One had to know that he had always been on edge with regards to the

matter of Martial Ancestor Li's sudden acceptance of him as a disciple. Thus, he naturally would not pass up an opportunity to get the inside story beforehand.

“What rewards do you think you can get, having turned in this many spiritual medicines?” the little old man suddenly asked, changing the subject.

“It should be exchangeable for two Foundation Establishment Pills! I had asked around earlier; if one turns in around ten spiritual medicines, one can exchange them for one Foundation Establishment Pill,” Han Li responded obediently. He knew that the other person would definitely have a reason for asking this kind of a question.

“Hmph! In a few days, when the rewards are granted, you will only have the portion of one Foundation Establishment Pill. You can stop dreaming about getting two!” said the little old man somewhat mockingly.

“What? How could it be this way! Could there be people who embezzle the rewards?” Han Li almost bounced up, an expression of disbelief on his face.

There isn't any embezzlement; no one dares to do that! Only your rewards have decreased. All the other people should receive their entire reward. Otherwise, who would be willing to participate in the next Trial by Blood and Fire!?” explained the little old man with a slant of his mouth.

“Could the reason be due to Martial Ancestor Li?” Han Li asked seriously after tilting his head and thinking for a moment.

“You can’t be considered to be too stupid, since you found the heart of the matter so quickly. It really is because Martial Ancestor Li accepted you as a disciple that it would be this way!” The little old man nodded, admiration flashing through his eyes.

“This sect has an unwritten practice; if there is any clear master-disciple relationship, the master has the right to take half of the disciple’s tribute to the sect as a gift to thank the master. Of course, this is limited to the first time, and cannot be repeated. The spiritual medicines you harvested in the forbidden area can be considered to be a kind of tribute to the sect. Thus, I reckon that the reason why Martial Ancestor Li so zealously accepted you as a disciple is most likely because he wanted your ten or so herbs as a gift. The spiritual medicines that are passed on are halved, and so your rewards are naturally also halved, so you should not hope for two Foundation Establishment Pills anymore,” the little old man explained thoroughly to Han Li.

Han Li knitted his eyebrows, but he revealed no traces of anger or dissatisfaction, only lowering his head soundlessly. This caused the little old man to feel somewhat shocked and sense that something was off. He naturally did not know that not only was Han Li not angry, he actually let out a long sigh and relaxed the heart that had always been tight.

It turned out that this new master had wanted his spiritual medicines; this had really been outside of his expectations, but it also caused Han Li to begin to relax. To Han Li, who was about to

refine these pills, one Foundation Establishment Pill could not amount to much! As long as he could succeed in refining these pills, he couldn't care less about the loss of merely one.

The little old man didn't know Han Li's attitude. Seeing that Han Li didn't make a sound, he thought that Han Li was holding in a stomach of stuffiness but was good at controlling it and didn't let it leak out. Thus, he lightly laughed and began to comfort Han Li:

“Although you get one less Foundation Establishment Pill, you exchanged it for being accepted as Martial Ancestor Li's in-name disciple; you haven't suffered a huge loss, so it's not too bad. One has to know that your talent is not very good; even if you were to use two Foundation Establishment Pills, your hopes of successfully entering the Foundation Establishment stage are not too high. It's more worth it to use one in exchange for gaining Martial Ancestor Li as an influential backer; this way, even if in the future you are still in the Qi Condensation stage, pretty much no one in the sect will dare to provoke you. You should know that although Martial Ancestor Li was not sincerely accepting you as his disciple, you are still carrying his influence. Which regular disciple or steward would give you trouble lightly? In addition, as far as I know, Junior Martial Uncle Li is very protective of his shortcomings!”

When Han Li heard this, he was somewhat moved in his heart. When the little old man had sent him the two bottles of pills before he went to the forbidden area, he could already tell that the other person was someone with a cold exterior but a warm heart; this person's character truly was not bad! But with these words, Han Li remembered them in his heart even more; it seemed as if the other person was worth building a deep relationship with!

Although Han Li thought this in his heart, outwardly he still pretended to be barely moved by what the little old man said, and after bitterly laughing a few times, he finally opened his mouth to speak, and carelessly spoke with him for a bit.

This Senior Martial Uncle Ma, seeing that Han Li had seemingly recovered from this setback, was very happy in his heart, and not long after he said his goodbyes and left. The Hundred Medicine Garden naturally was once again under Han Li's care.

Chapter 213: Preparation

Although the journey to the forbidden area had only taken ten days, Han Li felt as if several years had passed. Thus he lied down on his bed in the Hundred Medicine Garden for a long while basking in comfort and longing.

Not only did he finally return with his life intact from this trip he gambled his life with, he had also perfectly accomplished his goals. Now he could indulge in a truly worry-free and sound sleep. It seemed that all of the struggles from the mortal world were far away from him in a flash as he slept.

Han Li slept until the afternoon of the second day before awakening.

After Han Li woke up, he quivered with excitement. He immediately started to set up his plans for the future!

His first matter of business would naturally be to mature the three main medicines as soon as possible and properly preserve them. As for the other auxiliary medicine ingredients, he would naturally leave them for last. However, complete preparation for all of this was not a matter of tens days or half a month. According to Han Li's estimates, at the very minimum, he would need several years before being completely ready to start refining the pills.

As a result, Han Li wasn't in a hurry with his spiritual medicines. Instead, he arranged his harvest from the forbidden area.

The result was that he obtained over ten mid-grade spirit stones, several hundreds of low-grade spirit stones, a large pile of magic tools of all grades, several chunks of the centipede demonic beast's outer shell, several materials from the Inky Flood Dragon, and a bunch of rubbish.

However, apart from these items there were two items that Han Li were most interested in: a figurine holding a bow and arrow and a lustrous silver book page.

This figurine was mainly carved from wood, with a complete ears, nose, mouth, and eyes; it seemed gentle, as if it were alive. Furthermore it was dressed from head to toe in an extremely realistic metal armor suit with a bronze bow in hand. This was the magic tool that Han Li previously acquired from his elders; it was the high-grade magic tool 'Puppet Bowman'.

After he obtained magic tool was obtained, Han Li did not make use of it. That was because this magic tool required a secret soul splitting technique. The puppet required a sliver of spiritual sense to enter it in order to control it.

This soul splitting technique was not possible until one reached Foundation Establishment! It should be known that only cultivators at Foundation Establishment or higher have the sufficient spiritual sense to endure the pain of dividing one's soul. With the mere spiritual sense of a Qi Condensation cultivator, before even completing the soul splitting, the person would have already fallen into demise and gone mad.

It is often said that an Immortal's spiritual sense could be used to

look in all directions and to scan through items. However, this isn't the true significant of splitting one's soul. Originally, spiritual sense was nothing more than a small external technique. However, after cultivating the secret technique to split one's soul, it would be equivalent to having one, even several separate individual divine senses, with each divine sense capable of controlling several tools. The more times one divided their soul, the more magic tools they could control simultaneously.

It should be known that when Qi Condensation disciples normally confronted an enemy, at most they could use two magic tools at the same time. If they used any more, they would no longer be able to control them with ease. After all, who didn't have five or six magic tools on hand? If they were to throw them all at their opponent, it would definitely be ineffective and would cause the opponent to be baffled for a moment!

After Han Li fiddled with the figurine for a good while, he placed it down and took a look at the silver book page.

This silver book page was from the spoils Han Li obtained from the barefoot man of the Giant Sword Sect. The top was bumpy, textured with many peculiar decorative designs. It seemed very mysterious. Han Li pondered over it for a majority of the day without even a clue and could only set it aside for the time being.

Like that, in the following days, Han Li studied the silver book page while waiting for news from the upper echelon. He was seeing whether or not what the old man had said was true, that his reward had been reduced!

On the afternoon of the fourth day, Martial Uncle Wang and an unfamiliar steward went to find Han Li and only brought a single Foundation Establishment Pill as a reward. What they said was basically same as what the small old man had said! Martial Ancestor Li had taken away the spiritual medicines under the pretext of his disciple's filial tribute to his master.

After Han Li heard this, he coldly chuckled to himself but his exterior appearance didn't reveal the slightest complaint. Seeing this, the two stewards, who originally believed that they would have to waste time explaining clearly, let out a sigh of relief. Then they left, saying goodbye with beaming smiles.

After Han Li saw the pair's departure, he laughed at himself for a moment and put away his newly obtained Foundation Establishment Pill. Now he could take the time to shut himself away and consume the Foundation Establishment Pills after he refined them. After all, for each day he couldn't refine medicine pills, Han Li would be unable to peacefully enter seclusion.

Like that, month by month passed by. Three years of time flashed by and Han Li's pill refining preparations were finally completed. Within this rather lengthy period of time, several matters had occurred.

During this time, after Junior Martial Sister Chen consumed her rewarded Foundation Establishment Pill, she bitterly cultivated for an entire year. In the end, she succeeded in establishing her foundation and entered Foundation Establishment. However, her elder brother's luck wasn't very good. Although it was his second time consuming the Foundation Establishment Pill, he had failed

to make a breakthrough and lingered just outside of Foundation Establishment. It was said that this Great Young Master of the Chen Clan had lost complete confidence in the Immortal path and simply left the sect, returning to his clan to handle affairs.

Furthermore, Han Li's reputation in Yellow Maple Valley had gradually risen and could be considered to be a minor celebrity!

With regards to the tale of his great stroke of luck in the forbidden area, obtaining a large number of spiritual medicines and becoming the in-name disciple of Martial Ancestor Li, it had fluttered about through the sect on the first year of his return, causing other low level disciples to burn with great envy. But by the second year, this matter had gradually settled down.

However, there was still a small incident during this time. That Old Man Ye who reneged on over half of the agreed items suddenly sent over the rest of long overdue items without exception. There was even a bit extra! This caused Han Li to greatly learn firsthand the ease and confidence brought by having a greatly influential backer, and he could not help but be secretly pleased from his position! It seemed that his position of being an in-name disciple of Martial Ancestor Li had quite a few truly good benefits!

(TL: "Having an influential backer" - literally "大树底下好乘凉/the shade is plentiful underneath a large tree")

However, with regards to paying his respects to his master, Han Li truly had no words to say! Apart from being assigned as an in-name disciple to the man and receiving a personally transcribed copy of the 《Azure Essence Sword Arts》 from him, Han Li did not

hear anything else from him in these three years. It seemed that he had completely forgotten about Han Li long ago!

Apart from a few unspoken complaints, Han Li was quite satisfied with his current situation. He currently was wholeheartedly throwing himself into the first steps of refining the Foundation Establishment Pills. He naturally did not wish for anyone to disturb him.

However, his life of near seclusion had finally come to a close. About three days ago, Han Li finished maturing the last auxiliary spiritual medicine he required and thus possessed all his ingredients. All he needed was one last thing!

After several days of ordering and packing, Han Li packed his ripened spiritual medicines in a neat order and headed toward Yue Lu Hall.

Yue Lu Hall was exactly the same as Han Li had last seen it several years ago. Naturally, those who were guarding the transportation formation had already been replaced with another two Foundation Establishment disciples. However, the procedure was the same along with the same intolerant gazes, causing Han Li to laugh inwardly. Regardless, he still entered Yue Lu Hall without any trouble.

Walking along the signless passage, Han Li saw that ugly man who caused him much unhappiness. He was currently sleeping inside the stone room!

Han Li wrinkled his brow. After muttering to himself for a moment, he took out a small bell magic tool. Then he walked up to the ugly man and lightly shook the bell next to his ear.

This small bell wasn't much to Han Li's ear but it caused the ugly man to act as if his buttocks were on fire. He immediately jumped and loudly yelled unclearly, "What's happening! Who is it? Yi! What are you up to?"

The ugly man was still clearly half asleep. For the moment, he actually didn't use coarse language toward Han Li! Han Li didn't see this as rude and immediately mentioned his title as an apprentice to his master.

"This one is Martial Ancestor Li Huayuan's disciple and wishes to borrow Earth Fire for his own use. Will your distinguished self open the door?"

"Martial Ancestor Li?"

The ugly man clearly heard of Martial Ancestor's famous name and immediately jumped. He hurriedly and repeatedly said several praises and turned around, walking to the stone door. After he had just walked two steps, he immediately thought of something and then turned around, sizing up Han Li with a doubting gaze.

When Han Li saw this, he clearly understood the other man's intention. After a moment of hesitation, he took out the 《Azure Essence Sword Arts》 Li Huayuan had delivered to him and presented it to the ugly man. On it was Martial Ancestor Li's

personal signature.

He did not think that this ugly man not only knew of Martial Ancestor Li's name but also recognized a bit of his handwriting. After he looked at the book for a bit, he respectfully returned it to Han Li. He then said with a smiling face, "I don't know whether this Junior Martial Brother wishes to refine tools or refine pills. I will certainly arrange it for Junior Martial Brother!"

Han Li was originally relying on Martial Ancestor Li's name to see whether or not he could get a few special considerations with regards to Earth Fire. Seeing that the ugly man tactfully took the initiative to say these words, Han Li said with a relaxed expression, "This one plans to refine a few pills and hopes that a room can be arranged with rather mild and stable Earth Fire. I trouble your esteemed self!"

Previously, Han Li asked the small old man about the approximate circumstances of the Earth Fire grounds and knew that this location was where the rooms for Earth Fire was arranged for use. Thus he had said those words.

"That is easy to do. This one will immediately arrange it for Junior Martial Disciple! However, the service charge...", the ugly man replied, seeming embarrassed.

When Han Li heard this, he faintly smiled. He unexpectedly took out a mid-grade spirit stone and handed it over to the ugly man, leisurely adding, "This one will naturally pay the amount of spirit stones in accordance to the norm! Because the time to refine these pills will be long, this mid-grade spirit stone can be considered an

advanced payment. If it is too much, then so be it!”

Chapter 214: Earth Fire Room

“Hee hee! Good, good! I will prepare everything for Junior Martial Brother right now!” The ugly man, seeing that Han Li had actually given him a mid-grade spirit stone, immediately beamed with joy.

One had to know that although the generally accepted exchange rate in the world of cultivators was one hundred low-grade spirit stones for one mid-grade spirit stone, in reality those willing to use a mid-grade spirit stone to exchange for one hundred low-grade spirit stones were very few in number.

This was because everyone knew that under the same circumstances, the speed of absorbing Spiritual Qi from a low mid-grade spirit stone was much faster than when using low-grade spirit stones. Just based on this point, everybody wanted to keep a mid-grade spirit stone and naturally would not pay much attention to low-grade spirit stones.

Of course, the situation when exchanging high-grade spirit stones with mid-grade spirit stones was the same.

After the ugly man had happily received this fire-attribute spirit stone, he treated Han Li even more obsequiously. He immediately led Han Li before a huge, five-colored stone door and pulled out a purple command medallion from his waist, pointed it at the stone door, and shook it.

Red light flashed across the purple command medallion and a

wisp of rosy light shot from it, precisely hitting the door; this caused the five-colored flowing light to rapidly gyrate. Finally, with a few ear-splitting “creaks”, the stone door slowly rose, revealing a black tunnel behind it. This tunnel was a few tens of feet high and was square in shape.

“Junior Martial Brother, the room with Earth Fire is just past this walled stone path. Let’s head over there now!” said the ugly man to Han Li ingratiatingly as he squeezed out a few traces of a smile.

“En!” Han Li nodded his head without saying anything, then took the lead to walk into the tunnel.

“Although this dock stone cannot be considered a rare item, it is still not a very common material in this world. To be able to find so much at one time and then use it as bricks to construct the tunnel and the room, it was only after a few Martial Ancestors with great ability from previous generations had spent a great deal of effort that it was constructed. Due to dock stone’s ability to resist high temperatures and the strange effects of refining using Earth Fire, no big accidents have occurred yet ever since this Earth Fire began to burn!” said the ugly man, showing off a little as he led the way.

Han Li’s interest was greatly aroused when he heard this; he couldn’t help but touch the black stone wall off to the side and found that it was smooth and ice-cold!

“This dock stone, where is it produced? It can actually resist Earth Fire, which is thirty percent more powerful than true fire. It

truly is something special,” Han Li expressed his approval, a rarity, and casually asked.

“This? I heard that although it isn’t too rare of an item, our State of Yue really doesn’t produce any of it; these were all obtained by the Martial Ancestors from a state extremely far to the west. It really was extremely troublesome!” explained the ugly man.

Just like this, Han Li followed behind the ugly man. In the time it took to roll one’s eyes they had passed the other two similarly large stone doors, finally walking out of the dock stone tunnel. They appeared within an extremely large, round-shaped lobby.

This large lobby was similarly constructed of dock stone, but it was four or five hundred feet in diameter and was taller than a hundred feet; it was shockingly enormous! Evenly distributed white stone doors of identical size surrounded the huge lobby, roughly thirty of them in total.

There were no traces of other humans in the large lobby, only Han Li and the ugly man, both of whom had just arrived.

Han Li, after curiously sizing up the place, heard the ugly man say with a laugh:

“Underneath this large lobby is the location where the Earth Fire gathers and burns the brightest; thus, the sect opened up a total of thirty-six Earth Fire refining rooms here; the best rooms for refining pills are number eighteen and number nineteen.”

“However, number eighteen is already occupied by a Senior Martial Uncle, so Junior Martial Brother should use room number nineteen! Although it is somewhat worse than number eighteen, the flame intensity and stability are also extremely outstanding,” said the ugly man with a grin. As he spoke, he led Han Li in front of a door with “nineteen” painted in gold on its surface,

Hearing this, Han Li did not say anything and silently nodded his head, indicating his assent.

The ugly man, seeing this, immediately pulled out a jade tablet and stuck it on the door, and the white stone door automatically opened. Then, the ugly man and Han Li entered this room.

The room was square; its surface area was average, only eighty or ninety square feet in size; however, in the heart of the room was a round heap a few feet wide, and a fist-sized gourd was hanging from each of the four walls. A jade green meditation mat was also in a corner not too far away.

The round heap was similarly made of dock stone and was extremely flat, only half a foot tall. However, eight lifelike, fire-red miniature dragon figures were inlaid at the edges of the round heap. In addition, the mouths of the dragons were slightly elevated, aimed at a location in the air above the heart of the round heap, and they assumed a very lifelike spitting position.

After clearly seeing the circumstances inside of the room, Han Li felt quite astonished, but before he even opened his mouth to ask, the ugly man had already gotten close to the round heap and took the initiative to explain to Han Li.

“Junior Martial Brother, this is this room’s Earth Fire opening; the Earth Fire needed to refine pills shoots out from these eight dragon bodies. In addition, one can adjust the intensity and height of the flames according to one’s needs. The exact technique to control it is inscribed on the surface of the stone heap,” explained the ugly man, pointing at the round heap.

However, he then pointed at the four gourds hanging on the walls and said:

“Within these gourds are spark sand, which can temporarily add to the intensity of the Earth Fire; if Junior Martial Brother feels that the Earth Fire’s temperature is not high enough, you can use these to temporarily increase its intensity, but the duration will not be long. In addition, Junior Martial Brother should carefully put away this jade tablet. Once the door to the room closes, all contact with the outside world will be cut off. Unless numerous Core Formation cultivators put their strength together, nobody can enter from the outside, so Junior Martial Brother can be assured that there will be absolutely no one who will disturb you!”

Hearing these words, Han Li began to rejoice quietly in his heart; this kind of a completely sealed off environment was just what he needed, and he couldn’t help but reveal a few traces of delight.

At this time, seeing that his explanations were good enough, the ugly man said goodbye and took his leave.

Han Li, after watching the ugly man walk out of the room,

immediately used the jade tablet and caused the stone door to seal shut. Then, he excitedly walked to the round heap and, after circling it many times, began to closely inspect those eight spitting dragons.

In the past few years, Han Li had purposefully spent a huge amount of time researching techniques for refining pills, all for the sake of refining this Foundation Establishment Pill. Thus, he could not be considered a stranger to the Dao of alchemy. He knew that whether or not refining a pill succeeded was related mainly to the control of the fire, as well as opening the furnace to retrieve the pill at the right timing.

As for the composition of the ingredients and their quantities, after being put into practice countless times by former generations, they had already been clearly described on the recipe, so one did not have to consider it. Of course, appropriately increasing or decreasing the quantities needed to form a pill once was acceptable. As long as one followed the fixed scale, both increasing or decreasing the quantities of the ingredients was permitted.

However, while it was easy to say, actually doing it would be extremely difficult!

After accurately controlling the pill furnace's fire, one also had to grasp how to open the furnace at the right time. Who knew how many prospective alchemists these two great problems had confounded!

Even the current, most well-known masters of alchemy could not

help but admit that even if they were to personally attempt it, the success rate of forming a pill would still not be too high, only roughly a fifty-fifty chance of success, and this was for refining the pills they were the most proficient at. Thus, one did not even have to mention any regular alchemist!

The success rate of refining a pill completely depended on whether or not the alchemist's experience was plentiful. The more an alchemist had refined a pill, the higher their odds of successfully refining a pill would be. Thus, both alchemists and talisman masters were neck-and-neck for the two most profitable careers in the cultivating world, and thus they were also the two most popular occupations.

From his inquiries was actually clear about these things, and he knew that based on his novice self, wanting to refine a Foundation Establishment Pill at this moment was purely a dream. Thus, he had already planned out from the start to refine these Foundation Establishment Pills one by one!

In this way, no matter how many times he failed, he would not feel too distressed about the loss of spiritual medicines. And the amount of spiritual medicines he had prepared was enough to refine more than a hundred pills; he trusted that this many ingredients would be sufficient for him to accumulate enough experience early on.

Having made a decision, Han Li committed the method of how to use the dragons to memory. Then, he began to form the appropriate hand seals, and shot out eight streaks of red light towards the dragons in a row. The dragons immediately absorbed

red light, and their mouths opened; a purple flame as thick as a chopstick spurting out from each of their mouths separately. Instantly, the high temperature of the flames began to diffuse throughout the air inside of the room, causing Han Li to be quietly shocked.

Then, Han Li tried adjusting the thickness of the flame, as well as finely manipulating the height of the flames spurting from the dragons. When he could control them with ease, he extinguished the flames from the dragons. Next, he walked towards the prayer mat and sat down cross-legged, then began to restore his energy.

Han Li sat for the greater half of a day; after feeling that his energy and physical strength had reached their optimal condition, he opened his eyes and stood up, preparing to begin refining the pills. However, Han Li's cultivation technique had luckily passed the tenth layer, allowing him to refrain from eating; thus, he did not need to eat.

Now, Han Li fished out the silver threaded cauldron that he had bought that day from his storage pouch, then placed a floating technique onto it, causing it to stop in midair directly above the round heap. This magic technique was also one that he had specifically cultivated for today's task, and he had used up many days learning it.

Han Li once again shot out red light towards the dragons, stimulating the release of the purple Earth Fire from the dragons.

Because ingredients had not been placed inside of the cauldron, Han Li controlled the fire and made it extremely thin, as thin as a

silk thread. Then, he caused the silver threaded cauldron to begin to rotate in midair under the heating of the eight flames.

After a quarter of an hour, the silver threaded cauldron was already blisteringly hot and emitted a shockingly high temperature.

Seeing this, Han Li pointed at the small cauldron, causing its lid to immediately fly into the air, revealing the opening of the cauldron. He flipped his right hand, and a white jade bottle appeared in it; the bottle contained a precise quantity of fine spiritual medicine powder that he had prepared earlier.

Controlling the small bottle, Han Li dumped the medicinal powder inside of the bottle completely into the silver threaded cauldron; then, he immediately tossed this bottle and retrieved another bottle from his storage pouch, continuing to repeat the same motion.

Like this, Han Li completely dumped all of the ten spiritual medicine powders that he needed into the silver threaded cauldron, finally replacing the lid and covering it up again. The first step was finally completed, seemingly in a perfect manner, and no mistakes had occurred.

Chapter 215: Refining Pills And Foundation Establishment

The purple fire that the eight dragons spat out, under Han Li's manipulation, became thick, almost as thick as a finger, while the silver threaded cauldron's speed of revolution actually slowed down. It began to slightly tremble above the flames.

As time passed by, the medicinal fragrance that the small cauldron emitted could stir up a person's spirit, but Han Li was clear that at this time he was still very far away from forming a pill; at the very least, he would need to use an even more intense flame to instantaneously coagulate the pill. Only in this way would he be able to produce the pill.

Thinking to this point, the purple flame under Han Li's control became even more dazzling, even becoming as thick as a bowl's opening, causing the entire silver threaded cauldron to be enclosed within the flames. Thus, from afar, the small cauldron had already become a massive fireball, and the medicinal fragrance was increasingly heavy.

Han Li knew without guessing that this was the medicinal powder beginning to coagulate into a pill, and so he became increasingly careful.

But right at that moment, a muffled explosion came from the cauldron; although its sound wasn't loud, it caused Han Li's heart to sink, and his expression was somewhat ugly.

After hesitating for a moment, Han Li sighed and stopped the Earth Fire. Then, with a wave of his hand, he opened the lid of the scalding small cauldron and reached his head out to take a look.

Within the cauldron were numerous chunks of light-blue solids that had split; it seemed like they were the waste products from the yet-to-coagulate pill!

Han Li shook his head and retrieved another jade box, placing it on the ground. Then, he controlled the silver threaded cauldron and flipped it, dumping these waste pills into the box, then stowed them away. Even if these were waste pills, they were still composed of various spiritual medicinal powders that had yet to coagulate; Han Li could not bear to just throw them away like that. Who knew if in the future he would have any other uses for them!

After completing all of this, Han Li went back to sitting on the prayer mat until the silver threaded cauldron had completely cooled down before starting to refine pills again.

He performed the same procedure with the same powder ingredients and the same technique when controlling the flame, but unfortunately, this time he still failed on the coagulation step.

This time, Han Li's face had no expression; when his condition had been properly adjusted, he silently began the next cycle.....

.....A month's time passed. The ugly man, seeing that Han Li had yet to come out of the Earth Fire room, felt very shocked. However, he was even more excited, because in this way he could

charge even more fees.

After two months, stone door number eighteen still did not open; apart from the elation in his heart, the ugly man also felt great astonishment.

Three months.....

After six months, Han Li still showed absolutely no indication of coming out. Now, the ugly man's joy had long since disappeared completely, leaving behind only an expression full of anxiety and a stomach that felt unsettled.

Nearly half a year's time, with regards to pill or weapon refining, was not actually a very rare occurrence. The ugly man had seen even longer periods of seclusion numerous times!

But the people who had spent that much time in the Earth Fire room were all at the very least disciples above the Foundation Establishment stage! It was truly his first time seeing a Qi Condensation disciple like Han Li spend so long inside there refining pills.

In addition, Qi Condensation disciples could only hold out at most a month without eating; could this disciple of Martial Ancestor Li have brought in food and drink with him, allowing him to persevere for so long?! The ugly man thought with a doubtful expression.

Inside of the Earth Fire room, Han Li sat cross-legged on the prayer mat, looking at the twenty or so vividly blue Foundation Establishment Pills floating in front of him, an expression of deep thought on his face.

These pills were all the rewards that Han Li had received from spending countless amounts of his blood, sweat, and tears during this past half year. Obtaining them was truly difficult beyond comparison!

Han Li had been unable to pass even the coagulation step for the first twenty or so refinements. Looking at each of the waste pills, his heart felt very pained. He had almost given up, deciding that after he had returned and learned the proper alchemy techniques from other alchemists, he would start refining Foundation Establishment Pills again. Although the amount of time he would waste would be incredibly long, it would be better than for him to vainly squander his spiritual medicines!

However, before he was about to leave, he decided, perhaps by a stroke of divine inspiration, to open the cauldron and make another refinement. And this time, as if by the aid of the gods, the pill actually coagulated; in addition, when he opened the furnace to retrieve the pill, he was miraculously able to successfully retrieve it on his first try. Thus, he obtained his first Foundation Establishment Pill that he had created by his own hands.

This Foundation Establishment Pill, apart from being slightly smaller, was exactly the same as the other three medicinal pills that he already had. This caused Han Li's spirit to be greatly stirred up!

With this time's encouragement, Han Li gritted his teeth and dispelled the idea of returning; he calmed his heart and continued.

Following this time's experience of success, Han Li's success rate in coagulating the pill immediately began to increase like crazy; within three refinements, he successfully coagulated the pill once. As for opening the furnace, Han Li had extraordinary innate skill; he successfully retrieved more than half of the medicinal pills from the furnace on his first try. This was something that Han Li had never expected could happen!

During this period of time, when Han Li felt extremely hungry and thirsty, he would take out the bottle of fasting pills that he had received from the little old man and eat one; then, he would be able to persevere for another month! He had obtained this bottle of fasting pills by exchanging them for a few hundred-year-old herbal medicines! Today, they just so happened to come in handy.

Like this, when the raw materials Han Li possessed were almost completely used up, he had obtained this batch with a frightening amount of Foundation Establishment pills; the number of medicinal pills in this batch greatly surpassed his initial expectations!

When he had heard early on about the great difficulties of refining pills, he reckoned that it could be considered pretty good if he were to even obtain seven or eight of them! But today it seemed that it was not as excessively difficult to refine as he had heard from the cultivating world! Could those alchemists be misguiding other cultivators? Or was it that he truly had an innate

talent for refining pills!

Han Li felt perplexed!

In reality, Han Li had thought too far to the left; the technique for refining pills was actually even more difficult than was spread around in the outside world. It would be impossible for one to groom an alchemist with average talent without twenty to thirty years of time and a nearly astronomical amount of money.

And the Han Li of today, with respect to his skill in refining Foundation Establishment Pills, could already be considered part of the upper echelon when compared with other average alchemists! The reason why such an inconceivable phenomenon could occur was completely due to Han Li's nearly half a year of refining the same pill.

One had to know that even the most rich and imposing sects would have no way of having an adequate supply of precious ingredients to allow an alchemist to refine the same pill for half of a year's time.

This kind of thing was somewhat possible if one were to consider the lowest grade medicinal pills! However, if it were low-grade medicinal pills, what need was there for one to purposefully refine and accumulate experience? In any case, the ingredients were cheap, and if it was not refined successfully one could just start again.

Han Li did not understand this, and so naturally he did not figure

it out; however, after briefly mulling over it, he let it go. This was because he had suddenly had the idea of immediately swallowing the Foundation Establishment Pill and attempt to break through the Foundation Establishment bottleneck.

This thought was extremely strong, causing Han Li to consider very seriously the possibility of undergoing closed-door cultivation in this Earth Fire room.

.....

After eleven months, the stone door to the Earth Fire room that Han Li was in remained tightly shut with no sign of opening.

On this day, the ugly man was numbly gazing at the nineteenth stone door with an anxious expression! He was certain that something had definitely occurred to Han Li inside. Otherwise, even Foundation Establishment cultivators should have already come out.

He was not actually worried for Han Li as a person; rather, he was seriously afraid that Martial Ancestor Li would, after discovering his disciple's mishap, would take out his anger on him. In addition, although he was a close relative of Sect Leader Zhong, which was the reason why he could watch over this area, the ugly man was very clear that if Martial Ancestor Li really became angry over this, his supporter would definitely not take the initiative for him.

Just as the ugly man's stomach was filled with anxiety, the stone

door in front of him suddenly flashed with a white light, then it opened soundlessly. Next, a person walked out, flushed with success; this was Han Li, who had been inside of the room for close to a year.

The ugly man reacted after a long time and was instantly both surprised and happy; he hurriedly took a few steps forward with a mouthful of complaints:

“Junior Martial Brother, why have you only come out now? If you hadn’t come out, I would’ve... Yi! You.....!”

The ugly man had just spoken a few sentences when his eyes suddenly became round, as if he had seen a ghost. He pointed at Han Li, his mouth open and his tongue tied; he was unable to say anything!

“What, is there something wrong with me?” Han Li asked with a slight smile, glancing at the light that suddenly flashed across the person’s face.

“Your..... your cultivation technique! Am I.....? Could..... could you be in the Foundation Establishment stage?” The ugly man regained his focus after a long time and asked while stammering with a confused and alarmed expression.

“Yes! After I refined the pill, I felt that the environment here wasn’t bad, so I swallowed a Foundation Establishment Pill and underwent closed-door cultivation. In the end, I successfully broke through the bottleneck; now, I truly am a Foundation

Establishment cultivator!” Upon hearing the other person ask in this way, Han Li declared proudly while stretching lazily.

“Reach Foundation Establishment here?”

The ugly man glanced at the Earth Fire room behind Han Li, then glanced at Han Li, still unable to believe it! Undergoing Foundation Establishment inside of an Earth Fire room specifically for refining pills, this was truly his first time hearing of anything like this!

However, after moving his lips a few time, he did not voice the questions that he had. Not only was the other person Martial Ancestor Li’s disciple, simply based on his identity as a Foundation Establishment cultivator, he was already not someone that a Qi Condensation disciple like him could afford to provoke.

“What, is it not allowed?” Han Li casually glanced at the other person and asked impolitely. He immediately emitted the pressure that only Foundation Establishment cultivators could release. This caused the ugly man, who was very close to him, to instantly be forced many steps backwards, and he began to sweat profusely.

“Of course it isn’t; there are no such nonsensical rules from above. Congratulations to Junior Martial Uncle on his great success in breaking through the bottleneck!” The ugly man was actually very clever, immediately nodding his head and bending over at the waist, saying this while laughing with him. Even his previous way of addressing Han Li as “Junior Martial Brother” was immediately changed to “Junior Martial Uncle”.

Since the other person had successfully reached the Foundation Establishment stage today, he could be considered the ugly man's elder; to be somewhat more deferential was a necessity.

The ugly man was able to adopt a very lighthearted perspective! He understood very thoroughly what the appropriate behavior should be towards those with greater power in the cultivating world!

Chapter 216: Medicinal Power

Seeing how careful the ugly man was, Han Li felt embarrassed from trying to find an opportunity from him. He had no better option than to revoke his original intention of teaching him a lesson. After all, apart from the ugly man's previous rudeness to him, he had made no other great offenses toward him!

With this thought, Han Li expression relaxed as he insipidly said, "Since there's nothing else, I will take my leave!"

With that said, Han Li departed, light as a feather.

For a very long moment, the ugly man looked at Han Li's departing figure and finally gave a long sigh. He then mumbled to himself, "This is truly against reason! He hid himself inside the Earth Fire room and casually secluded himself, succeeding in Foundation Establishment. As for me. how could I, who found a quiet room and a great amount of supplementary medicine pills, not actually succeed! No wonder! Since this person has been accepted as Martial Ancestor Li's disciple, it seems his aptitude is certainly beyond normal!"

The ugly man actually blamed Han Li's success on heavenly talent! If Han Li himself heard this, he would perhaps bitterly laugh without end!

At this moment, Han Li had already left Yue Lu Hall. The two individuals guarding the transportation formation had already been exchanged with two others. Otherwise, if they saw Han Li

suddenly reach Foundation Establishment from Qi Condensation, they would have likely been astonished.

Han Li slowly drove his flying magic tool through the sky without the slightest of worry as he thought back to his experience of entering Foundation Establishment.

When Han Li had finished refining the Foundation Establishment Pills five months before, after some deliberation, he felt that undergoing Foundation Establishment in the Earth Fire room wasn't a bad idea. At the very least, he wouldn't need to worry about others suddenly intruding and interrupting his seclusion, forcing him to leave things half finished!

Thus, with his mind made up, Han Li consumed one of his original three Foundation Establishment Pills and then began to make use of medicinal power spreading throughout his body!

The power of the Foundation Establishment Pill flared very quickly. After several short hours, Han Li felt a small inferno roaring and steadily growing inside his Dantian. All the other parts of his body felt colder than ice. Altogether, he felt a completely distinct feeling of ice and fire!

However, this feeling only continued for a short amount of time before the inferno in his Dantian disappeared without a trace. The rest of his body also returned to its normal temperature, causing Han Li to be a bit stunned!

After a moment of bewilderment, Han Li's complexion greatly

changed as he placed his hands against his Dantian without letting go.

Because at that time, a fierce pain similar to seven or eight daggers simultaneously ripping into him occurred. Not prepared for this in the slightest, Han Li became incomparably pale, slack-jawed, and beaded with sweat the size of soybeans while his entire body bent into a complete curl!

While Han Li was painfully curled into a ball on the floor, he was raining curses in his heart. Why did the people who gave the pill to him never mention the pain that came after taking the Foundation Establishment Pill!

But without even completing his curses, the sharp pain in his Dantian suddenly turned into an explosion.

This explosion turned into countless threads of warmth, immediately flowing throughout his body's meridians and reaching even the marrow of his bones. But the warmth then turned into a strange, unbearable itch, as if there were countless ants crawling all over his body. This caused him to want to bang his head against the wall and slightly alleviate his suffering.

This torment that nearly caused Han Li to go mad continued for the time it took to eat a meal before it gradually diminished. At this moment, Han Li was finally able to support himself against the corner of the wall and stand with much difficulty. Sweating profusely, he was completely covered in a layer of an indescribable gray substance. Furthermore, it was sticky and emitted an unspeakably strange odor.



However, Han Li didn't care about this at all! What was on his mind was that his cultivation had progressed to the twelfth layer. Furthermore, he was comfortably warm from head to toe without the slightest of discomfort.

It was very clear that the Foundation Establishment Pill from before had already improved his bodily structure, cleansing his marrow and replacing his tendons. As for the warmth in his body, it should be residual medicinal power of the Foundation Establishment Pill. However, after he absorbed it, he used it to increase his magic power. This must be the reason why disciples seclude themselves for three months after taking the Foundation Establishment Pill. Otherwise, this medicinal power would gradually fade away after time had passed.

Han Li now started truly following the steps laid out by those in Foundation Establishment and sincerely sat down, absorbing the residual medicinal power.

However, Han Li quickly discovered that the bits of residual medicinal power that remained in his body could only slightly deepen his magic power and could not again be used to improve his physique.

If it were only one Foundation Establishment Pill, after cleansing the marrow and replacing the tendons, none would naturally let this good opportunity to increase one's magic power pass by, so

they would seclude themselves for three months to thoroughly absorb the medicinal power. They naturally wouldn't easily abandon it.

However, Han Li was not the same. He had great amounts of Foundation Establishment Pills on hand. These bits of residual medicinal power weren't enough to enter his eyes! What he was concerned with was improving his physique several times, eventually entering Foundation Establishment! After all, cleansing the marrow and replacing the tendons was the crucial point of breaking through Foundation Establishment.

After sitting in meditation for over ten days, Han Li clearly understood this. Naturally, he did not have the patience to wait several months before taking his second Foundation Establishment Pill.

After some contemplation, he came to the conclusion that taking consecutive Foundation Establishment Pills shouldn't cause any large problems. At most, there should be an excess of residual medicinal power, but this was nothing. After pondering several more times, he took a second Foundation Establishment Pill without waiting any further.

These was a similar pain and a similar tingling itch. Han Li, who was already prepared, still suffered greatly! However, Han Li had already felt this before, and the sensation seemed to feel slightly lesser than before. However, the impurities that were released from his body were not small. It seemed that his aptitude was truly terrible!

After taking his second consecutive Foundation Establishment Pill, Han Li did not feel anything strange about the residual magic power in his body. Naturally, the warmth in his bones felt slightly stronger. There weren't any problems at all! Furthermore, his magic power had leaped to the thirteenth layer, the peak of Qi Condensation.

As such, Han Li started organizing his thoughts. He shouldn't take the Foundation Establishment Pills one after another. Each medicine pill had a similar effect of cleansing one's marrow, further releasing more impurities inside Han Li's body!

However, when he took the third pill, Han Li clearly felt the Foundation Establishment Pill's marrow cleansing effect decrease noticeably, discharging less and less impurities. But at the same time, the true essence and magic power within his body underwent a fantastic change.

The original condition of his true essence, after undergoing several Foundation Establishment Pill, had gradually consolidated, changing further into liquid. After his seventh Foundation Establishment Pill, apart from a small area at the core of his Dantian, his true essence had turned completely into liquid.

However, after taking the seventh Foundation Establishment Pill, the residual magic power in Han Li's body approached saturation. The original feeling of warmth throughout his body had now turned into a scorching heat, causing Han Li to hesitate!

He truly did not know if whether or not chaos would stem from the great amount of medicinal power released once he took the

eighth Foundation Establishment, ! But Han Li felt that he was truly close to reaching Foundation Establishment. It was perhaps only one or two pills away!

After slight contemplation, Han Li's thirst for Foundation Establishment won over, and he took his eighth Foundation Establishment Pill.

However, when this medicine pill entered his belly, the residual medicinal power that he was barely able to control cried out, suddenly exploding. This heated up the meridians throughout Han Li body, causing his consciousness to become faint!

However, when Han Li woke from his scalding body, he discovered a pleasant surprise. While he was unconscious, he actually succeeded in breaking through, already entering Foundation Establishment.

Exhilarated, Han Li immediately thought of jumping into the air to release his excitement! But when he straightened his back, his entire body heated up and he once again fell to the floor, causing him to become greatly scared!

Although he had entered Foundation Establishment, the residual medicinal power of the eighth pill was not eased in the slightest and still flowed throughout his body. It was still very much dangerous!

Under his current circumstances, he immediately cultivated and absorbed his medicinal power. Otherwise, it could explode once

again at any time.

Although Han Li clearly understood the method of resolving this crisis, he was still incessantly grumbling inwardly, without the slightest of happiness.

Apart from the 《Azure Essence Sword Art》 Han Li had on hand, what other Foundation Establishment cultivation method did Han Li have! With just a look at his newly accepted master and how negligently he treated him, one could tell how crappy this cultivation technique was!

Furthermore, Han Li had already flipped through the book several times and made a few inquiries to others.

This sword art was truly common. Nearly all the Foundation Establishment disciples of Yellow Maple Valley had refined two or three layers. However, none continued to cultivate deeper than three layers. Han Li didn't clearly ask about the specific reason but the worthlessness of this sword art could be clearly seen!

Under these circumstances, although Han Li did not want to cultivate it, he could only force himself to.

With no better option, he took out the 《Azure Essence Sword Arts》and spread it out in front of him. Then he sat cross legged and cultivated in accordance to the book.

This Azure Essence Sword Art spanned through nine layers. The

first three layers could be cultivated by Qi Condensation disciples. The middle three layers and last three layers could only be cultivated by Foundation Establishment and Core Formation cultivators. Furthermore, for every three layers cultivated, one could use a divine ability exclusive to that sword art.

After cultivation the first three layers, without using a magic tool, one could use a single palm to release a sword streak about three meters long. Its power wasn't bad, capable of contending against high-grade magic tools!

After cultivating the middle three layers, one could release a protective sword shield on one's body in an instant. Although its defensive power was about the same as an elementary mid-grade defensive talisman, it could counterattack with a sword streak. When the sword shield received an attack, a sword streak would automatically be released to counterattack.

As for the last three layers...

Chapter 217: Sword Art

As for the divine ability upon completion of the last three layers of the sword art, it was the “Sword Shadow Splitting Light” technique; the prerequisite to cultivating it was the possession of a flying sword magic treasure. Of course, flying sabers were also acceptable.

After completely cultivating it, when using this divine ability to deal with enemies, one could borrow the sword light from the flying sword to create an illusion of a sword shadow completely identical to the flying sword. This could interfere with the enemy’s line of sight and attack the enemy along with the original sword. Although the sword shadow’s initial formation had only ten percent of the strength of the original sword, as one increased the sword art’s layer, its strength could increase. When it reached the ninth layer, it would have reached one-third of the original sword’s strength.

In addition, when cultivating the sword shadow, one could produce not just one illusion; from the seventh layer onwards, every additional layer one reached would allow one to produce an additional sword shadow. In this way, once one reached the pinnacle of the Azure Essence Sword Art, one could have three shadows that appeared to be identical to the original sword, yet only had one-third of its strength.

Thus, this “Sword Shadow Splitting Light Technique’s” divine ability seemed to be not too bad, and he could still cultivate it.

But Han Li already knew that there definitely must be something

fishy about this! Even though Yellow Maple Valley had so many Foundation Establishment cultivators, nobody had taken the time to deeply cultivate this technique. Thus, he deeply regretted not listening clearly back then to reason behind the sword art's lack of popularity, only believing that he definitely would not cultivate this Azure Essence Sword Art. Thus, he had casually and carelessly passed over it.

Now, although Han Li clearly knew that this magic technique had a great problem, he couldn't help but to summon his courage and cultivate it at least once; he could only hope that this technique would not have any kind of consequence that would cause him to become obsessed.

However, after thinking closely about it, although other people had not deeply cultivated it, they still succeeded with two or three layers. In this way, it seemed like there shouldn't be a big problem with cultivating it a little bit.

Holding onto these self-assuring thoughts Han Li helplessly took in the medicinal strength about to flare up within his body according to the method of the Azure Essence Sword Art.

Han Li had only rotated his cultivation technique once before feeling a sudden rumble. The feeling that he got when his absorption of the medicinal power caused his magic strength to rise greatly almost made him cry out in happiness!

Immersed in this kind of marvelous feeling, Han Li couldn't help but allow the magic technique to rotate one time after another, as his consciousness slowly slunk off to a faraway place.

After sitting there for an unknown length of time and having cleaned out the last bits of medicinal strength in his body, Han Li finally regained consciousness from his wonderful experience.

The now-sober Han Li stared somewhat sluggishly for a moment, but immediately afterwards he stood up without saying anything. Then, he squinted his eyes and tilted his head, thinking for a moment. He suddenly raised arm and gestured in front of his body, and an azure, misty sword streak a few feet long instantly shot out of his finger. Its chilly aura was incredibly threatening, and it appeared to be incomparably sharp.

Seeing this cold light, Han Li actually did not feel happy; instead, he began to laugh bitterly! Then, with a sudden shake of his hand, the azure light actually expanded ferociously, in an instant becoming roughly ten feet long, almost piercing the rock wall on the other side.

“Dammit! I didn’t expect that the remaining medicinal power would be so strong; I actually cultivated to the fourth layer of the sword art in an instant! Who knows if there will be any big side effects!” Han Li whispered to himself with a cloudy and uncertain expression on his face.

“No matter, at most I just won’t cultivate this sword art in the future anymore!” Han Li muttered, then let his arm fall. The azure-colored sword streak completely disappeared.

However, Han Li’s curiosity had been greatly piqued, and he still

picked up the “Azure Essence Sword Art” manual, and flipped through the sections related to using the sword as a shield to protect the body, committing them to memory.

Then, Han Li lowered his head and contemplated in silence, closing his eyes. Immediately afterwards, he abruptly opened his eyes, and a strange shield appeared around his body.

This azure-colored shield was very similar in size to other defensive items, but its outer appearance was not the usual smooth shape; instead, it appeared to be like a porcupine, with sharp streaks protruding from it. In addition, it seemed to be emitting faint traces of some kind of evil spirit.

“This is the protective sword shield?” Han Li carefully inspected the spiked shield in front of him with a certain amount of astonishment.

“The sword manual says this shield can autonomously send out sword streaks and counterattack opponents. What a pity that I have no way to test it out right now!” Han Li thought regretfully.

Next, Han Li moved his hands and feet, then closely inspected the true essence inside of his body; after discovering that there truly did not seem to be anything wrong, he relaxed and carefully put away his possessions, leaving the Earth Fire room. Then, he just so happened to directly run into the ugly man!

When he thought of the ugly man’s shocked expression towards him, Han Li couldn’t help but laugh in his heart in midair.

At this time, the sky was growing lighter, and Han Li returned to the Hundred Medicine Garden; he didn't run into a single person the entire time.

Back then, when he had used the excuse of finding a location to undergo closed-door Foundation Establishment cultivation, the medicine garden naturally returned to the hands of the little old man. This caused him to feel extremely unhappy, and he had spent much time blowing his beard and staring.

When Han Li entered the garden, the little old man was absorbing the Spiritual Qi from his surroundings with his eyes closed in front of his cottage. Although he did not open his eyes, he still accurately yelled out Han Li's name. This was unsurprising, considering that due to the restrictions on the Hundred Medicine Garden, apart from the little old man, only Han Li could enter or leave as he pleased.

However, right when this Senior Martial Uncle Ma had called out Han Li's name, he suddenly felt something and abruptly opened his eyes, staring at Han Li in disbelief.

"You actually successfully reached the Foundation Establishment stage?"

"Senior Martial Uncle Ma, this disciple truly luckily entered the Foundation Establishment stage!" Han Li bowed in greeting courteously and said with a gentle laugh.

Although the little old man stared blankly with shock for some time, he slowly returned to normal. However, he still muttered to himself:

“This is too unbelievable! He actually entered the Foundation Establishment stage!”

After he murmured these two sentences, he suddenly corrected his expression and said with respect:

“Since we are both Foundation Establishment cultivators right now, you don’t need to bring up the three words ‘Senior Martial Uncle’ anymore; from today onwards, we should refer to each other as Martial Brothers! Since I am somewhat older, if Junior Martial Brother does not despise it, you can just call me Senior Martial Brother Ma!”

Upon hearing this, Han Li nodded with a smile and did not oppose it. This kind of determining seniority based upon one’s realm was a tradition of the cultivating world; this was nothing to be modest about!

Following, the little old man, who was also Han Li’s Senior Martial Brother Ma, entered the room together with Han Li. Then, they each sat down at a table and began to steep a pot of good tea.

They had not been sitting for long when the little old man impatiently asked about how Han Li had reached the Foundation Establishment stage.

Han Li naturally would not tell the other person the real circumstances; however, he did not hide that he achieved Foundation Establishment in the Earth Fire room, obediently revealing it to the other person. This was because if the other person investigated even a little, he would be able to easily discover this matter.

He only said that he had rented an Earth Fire room from Yue Lu Hall, then swallowed the Foundation Establishment Pill that the sect had given him and cultivated behind closed doors for near a year; he did not know how, but somehow he luckily succeeded.

As he listened raptly to what Han Li said, the little old man clicked his tongue “zeze” incessantly, calling the situation strange.

When he had heard the story that Han Li had told him, he blinked his eyes and said to him:

“Junior Martial Brother Han! From what you said, your experience of reaching the Foundation Establishment stage is not too different from other people! Even you could reach Foundation Establishment with this kind of a natural ability; all I can say is that Junior Martial Brother was extremely lucky. Even a success rate of one percent is enough for you!” In the past few years, the little old man had become very familiar with Han Li, so when he spoke he was very direct and did not conceal his envy towards Han Li. In fact, even a jealous expression was emerging from his face.

“Hehe! This can only mean that I, Junior Martial Brother, am extremely lucky; I also did not expect that I could enter the Foundation Establishment Stage so easily!” Han Li laughed and

said with a grin.

“However, since Junior Martial Brother Han has successfully reached the Foundation Establishment stage, you have to let the sect head know so that Sect Leader Zhong can record your name down on the books! In this way, Junior Martial Brother will be treated according to how high-level disciples are treated, and the amount of spirit stones one receives after reaching Foundation Establishment is not trivial!” said the little old man in a joking manner.

“Much thanks to Senior Martial Brother’s pointers!” When Han Li heard this, his expression changed, and he said this sincerely.

“This can’t count for much! No matter how you see it, we have known each other for so many years; the things that I should remind you of, I will do my best to tell you,” said the little old man casually, waving his hand.

“In reality, after reaching the Foundation Establishment stage, the best benefit that the sect gives is still allowing Foundation Establishment disciples to pick at will a location in the Tai Yue Mountain Range. There, one can create their own cave and undergo isolated cultivation! Furthermore...”

Following, the little old man explained to Han Li in detail many things that one should pay attention to upon entering the Foundation Establishment stage, causing Han Li to nod his head continuously as he listened.

But when the other person had finished explaining these things and was leisurely conversing with Han Li, Han Li couldn't help but ask him about the "Azure Essence Sword Art".

"Azure Essence Sword Art!" A surprised expression flashed across the little old man's face!

But after he had deeply glanced at Han Li, he didn't question him further. He thought for a while and then opened his mouth:

"This Azure Essence Sword Art, I truly have heard others talk about it, and a few have actually cultivated it to the third layer. This sword art is not actually a technique from our Yellow Maple Valley; instead, it is a technique from a sect that we had extinguished many years ago called the Profound Sword Sect. In addition, it originally was not nine layers, but rather thirteen. Reportedly, when the Profound Sword Sect's Sect Leader saw that his sect was about to be extinguished, he wanted to destroy the sword art right then and there, but a few of the Martial Ancestors from our sect were not slow in making a movement, forcefully seizing half of the technique. The remaining half was destroyed and lost forever. Thus, the version of the "Azure Essence Sword Art" being circulated is only a fraction of the whole! At most, one can cultivate it to the Core Formation stage before there is simply no way to continue cultivating it. From hearsay, the complete sword art could be cultivated even up to Deity Transformation stage, but who knows if that is true or not?"

The little old man spoke up to here while wagging his head, then reached his hand out and picked up the teacup in front of him to take a drink. Then, he continued to say:

“Although the Azure Essence Sword Art, missing its later stages, is somewhat inferior when compared to other first-rate cultivation techniques, its strength is truly still not bad! The instantaneous characteristics of the sword streak and protective sword shield are even more sought after by a significant number of Foundation Establishment cultivators. Thus, if it was so easy to cultivate it, a significant number of people all over the sect would be willing to cultivate it as their main technique! After all, the techniques of the Nascent Soul stage are too far away from us, and we would have no way of using them.”

Chapter 218: Pros And Cons

When Senior Martial Brother Ma spoke up to here, he stopped for a moment. An expression of regret surfaced on his face, and he continued to say:

“Unfortunately, after one cultivates this sword art to a deep layer, there is an intolerable flaw. Starting from the fourth layer, when using the Azure Essence Sword Art to absorb Spiritual Qi from the environment, every few days the strange phenomenon of one’s cultivation scattering will occur. A small portion of the magic power that one gained from cultivating this magic art will bafflingly dissipate on its own a few days later. This has truly stumped many people!”

“The speed of loss at the fourth layer of this sword art is not too frightening; only one tenth of the newly cultivated magic power will dissipate. If one were to spend even a little effort, common cultivators would still be able to make up for it! But if one steps into the fifth or sixth layer, the rate of loss of spiritual power would be frightening; an additional loss of one tenth is added on every layer, causing one’s bitterly cultivated magic power to continue to greatly dissipate. That is also to say, twenty percent of newly cultivated magic power will be lost at the fifth layer of the sword art, and thirty percent at the sixth layer. In this way, who would still dare to cultivate the Azure Essence Sword Art?”

“In addition, the highest layer of the Azure Essence Sword Art that our sect’s disciples used to cultivate was the sixth layer. Above the sixth layer requires that one must be at the Core Formation stage to cultivate it; however, when this kind of cultivation technique reached the sixth layer, one would already lose close to a

third of one's spiritual power. How could these experts still dare to take this incredible risk! If at the seventh layer of the Azure Essence Sword Art one still continued to lose a huge amount of spiritual power, wouldn't these experts be incredibly wronged?!"

"One has to know that progressing one layer in a Core Formation stage cultivation technique is much harder! This Azure Essence Sword Art is already incomparably difficult to cultivate; nobody would be willing to waste ten or so years or even decades to take this incredibly stupid risk. Even more, this Azure Essence Sword Art is fragmented and incomplete, and it isn't some kind of divine technique! There simply isn't enough motivation for them to take this risk."

"However, this sword art's sword streak divine ability is truly very practical; simply giving up on it like this is somewhat of a pity. Thus, some people will only cultivate the first three layers of the Azure Essence Sword Art, and it has since become a very successful supporting technique. Thus, one doesn't need to worry about losing one's cultivation and can still continue to use the sword streak divine ability. Of course, even if one only cultivated the sword streak divine ability, it would require these disciples to spend four to five years of solitary cultivation to achieve it."

After hearing the little old man's lengthy explanation, Han Li could only stare with his mouth open. When he finally regained consciousness, he only felt a bad taste in his stomach!

It couldn't be! He had already cultivated to the fourth layer of the sword art! According to what the little old man said, if in the future he wanted to continued cultivating the Azure Essence

Sword Art, a tenth of the magic power he cultivated would dissipate for no reason. In addition, the deeper the layers, the more the loss of magic power would accumulate!

How could he continue to cultivate like this?

However, since everything had become very clear, no matter what he would not behave foolishly and continue to cultivate. Cultivation of the Azure Essence Sword Art would end here.

Han Li had not made this decision for long before the little old man's next words moved Han Li's heart again, and he felt that there was something off!

“Although the Azure Essence Sword Art has such a great drawback, it still has its own unique characteristics. Otherwise, it would not have become the signature technique of a sect back then,” the little old man suddenly remarked with some regret as he pressed his lips together.

“I once heard someone say that although cultivating this sword art is extremely slow, every time one successfully cultivates a layer, one may enlarge their meridians and have profound, wonderful effects on the Dantian. This causes the magic power of cultivators that have cultivated this sword art to be somewhat more profound than that of a cultivator of the same level.”

“But exactly how much more profound can it be? This depends on how many layers of the sword art one has cultivated.”

“But based on records from before, the only disciple that cultivated this Azure Essence Sword Art to the sixth layer, when he reached the Foundation Establishment stage, had magic power roughly a third greater than that of other cultivators in his level. This extra magic power was exactly the same amount as the magic power that he had lost while cultivating the Azure Essence Sword Art. This kind of coincidence must be mentioned; this sword art is truly somewhat profound!”

The little old man had seemingly studied this Azure Essence Sword Art quite a bit, and the more he spoke, the more his spirits were lifted up. Afterwards, spittle was even flying from his mouth, and he was very animated! This caused Han Li to hurriedly bring up some other matters, forcibly changing the subject from the Azure Essence Sword Art. Only then did Senior Martial Brother Ma return to normal.

To Han Li, even if this sword art had any other marvelous characteristic, he still would not cultivate it.

His aptitude originally was already not good; there must be something wrong with his brain if he intentionally cultivated this extremely slow, incomplete magic technique unless he did not want to reach Core Formation!

Even with those common cultivation techniques, Han Li reckoned that if he were to discover a few medicinal recipes, there was still somewhat of a possibility of him reaching Core Formation!

Han Li chatted with the little old man for a while longer before

taking his leave.

Now that he had reached Foundation Establishment, he naturally could no longer watch over the medicine garden for the other person; thus, he returned to the cottage that he normally lived in. After a little bit of cleaning up, he swiftly headed towards it.

At the time, the sky was very bright , making it the perfect opportunity for him to go to the council hall and take care of business.

The excitement in Han Li's heart had yet to retreat completely, since he had just reached the Foundation Establishment stage. His only thought was that he would take care of his business, then immediately open up a cave for himself!

Han Li had looked forward to this for a long time! After all, once he had his own patch of ground, he wouldn't need to be stealthy anymore no matter what he did, and he could do whatever he wanted in his own area.

The more Han Li thought about it, the more excited got; in no time, he had unconsciously arrived at the council hall.

The two young disciples guarding the big door obviously didn't recognize Han Li; however, they had clearly seen with a glance Han Li's identity as a Foundation Establishment cultivator. Thus, they naturally did not dare to delay Han Li just because he was young!

The two people stepped forwards simultaneously and immediately bowed to Han Li, showing their respect:

“This Junior Martial Uncle, is there something that you need us to help you with?”

“Junior Martial Uncle?”

When Han Li heard this, he thought it was somewhat funny. If he had met these two people a year ago, perhaps he would even have to call them Junior Martial Brother! Today, his status had greatly increased because he had reached Foundation Establishment, and he immediately became their senior! Han Li felt that he was not used to it.

However, seeing these people, whose ages were similar to his, greet him with such respect, he felt pretty good!

“Is Sect Master Zhong here? I have something I need to discuss with him!” Han Li said arrogantly.

These two Qi Condensation disciples couldn't help but glance at each other after hearing Han Li say this. The person on the right then replied:

“Sect Master has gone to the Hundred Chances Hall to take care of business, but he should be back quickly! Why doesn't Junior Martial Uncle wait for a moment in the hall pavilion?”

Han Li slightly knitted his eyebrows, but immediately returned to normal and said carelessly:

“Okay! Since it’s like this, I will just wait for a bit!”

“Great! Junior Martial Uncle, this way, please!”

The other person was also very clever, and he took two steps backwards, then led Han Li there.

Following this person, Han Li passed through the large lobby and was brought to a slightly larger room in the hall. Not only was this room extremely clean and tidy, a few pen and ink drawings were hung on the four walls, creating an elegant, scholarly atmosphere.

“Junior Martial Uncle can wait first here for a moment; when the Sect Master returns, this disciple will immediately report to him!” The youth skillfully poured a pot of fragrant tea for Han Li, then retreated.

Han Li nodded his head as he watched the youth’s retreating figure, but then shook his head!

He first nodded because he felt that whether it was this youth’s eyes or his bearing, both caused

Han Li to feel great satisfaction; it was as if he had no flaws, and that he had undergone a special training to get this kind of a face!

But when he shook his head, it was because he felt grieved for these low-level disciples!

For a cultivator to be forced to behave like a common servant instead of undergoing closed-door cultivation, taking turns watching the door and pouring tea, it truly was highly regretful!

Thinking about it now, if he hadn't used a Foundation Establishment Pill to buy out Elder Ye, perhaps his circumstances would not be much better than this person. He would similarly be required to bow and serve them cups of tea; perhaps he would be even more restricted!

Just as Han Li was sitting in the room, tasting the fragrant tea as many thoughts raced in his heart, Sect Master Zhong returned after a brief period.

When he heard from his manservant disciple that a young Foundation Establishment cultivator was looking for him, he couldn't help but feel astonished. This was because he could not remember this person based on the description given to him by manservant disciple; out of the hundreds of Foundation Establishment disciples, he had not found a person similar to this.

“Twenty-five or twenty-six years old with somewhat dark skin and a plain appearance...who could this be?” Zhong Lingdao was thirty percent surprised and twenty percent curious, so he hurriedly walked towards the guest lobby where Han Li was at.

When he entered the room, he saw a youth with an average appearance wearing a Yellow Maple Valley uniform, gazing at a flowery painting on a wall with his back towards the Sect Master. He was currently staring at it with great interest!

However, apparently the movements Sect Master Zhong made when he entered the room had been heard by the other person. Thus, this person immediately turned around, and greeted him with a bow:

“Senior Martial Brother Sect Master! Junior Martial Brother Han Li has come to see Sect Master!”

“Han Li?”

When Sect Master Zhong heard this name, he felt that it was somewhat familiar, as if he had heard it before! But when he carefully looked at the other person, apart from having a somewhat familiar face, he did not remember exactly who this person was. This caused him to feel somewhat ashamed in his heart, and a trace of awkwardness was revealed on his face.

“Han..... Junior Martial Brother Han, please sit; no need to be polite! Senior Martial Brother, as the Sect Master, has been busy with business and arrived a little late. Junior Martial Brother, please don’t take offense!”

Zhong Lingdao was a sly old fox who had seen many big winds and waves; with a few careless, ambiguous sentences, he had easily dissolved the awkward mood that he created by not recognizing

the other individual.

(TL: “winds and waves” - a lot of hard experiences)

Han Li was not actually shocked that Sect Master Zhong could not recognize him!

One had to know that the last time Han Li had seen this person was five years ago. At that time, he was only a low-quality and low-aptitude Qi Condensation disciple. Thus, Sect Master Zhong naturally would not put him in his heart, let alone have any kind of deep impression of him.

If the other person was actually able to recognize him on sight, Han Li would feel greatly shocked!

Chapter 219: Discussions

“Senior Martial Brother Sect Master, Junior Martial Brother was able to cultivate to Foundation Establishment by a fluke, thus he has come to Sect Master to inform him of this matter. I hope Sect Master could award me the privilege of establishing an Immortal's cave.” Han Li was not long winded, directly stating his purpose in coming.

“You’ve just cultivated to Foundation Establishment?” Zhong Lingdao first stared blankly before soon coming to realization.

To receive a Foundation Establishment Pill then waiting until the most opportune moment before consuming and succeeding in Foundation Establishment was not a rare matter! This Sect Master Zhong considered Han Li to be one of those cases.

“Hehe, congratulations to Junior Martial Brother Han on entering Foundation Establishment! The sect’s high-level disciples has increased by one. This is truly a matter worth celebrating!” Zhong Lingdao said with a faint smile as he twirled his long whiskers.

“This one was only lucky. This was thanks to the Foundation Establishment Pill bestowed by the sect!” Han Li replied, gleaming with radiance.

After Zhong Lingdao heard Han Li’s courteous words, he carefully sized up Han Li. At this moment, he felt Han Li was becoming more and more familiar. He must’ve seen him before.

But after a moment of thought, he could not remember when or where.

As such, Zhong Lingdao could not help but nod his head and muttered to himself, bitterly entering deep thought.

As Han Li saw this, he found this very funny and did not bother him. Minding his own business, he raised the teacup and slowly tasted the tea within.

After a short moment, with a flash of realization, Zhong Lingdao actually thought of the matter of the Writ of Immortal Ascension. He could not help but connect the youngster who originally stood in the main hall to the calm Junior Martial Brother before him.

Zhong Lingdao, having recalled Han Li's circumstances, could not help but sharply raise his head. He cried out with a face full of surprise, "It's you, the disciple who entered the sect with the Writ of Immortal Ascension! You actually succeeded in Foundation Establishment?"

"Senior Martial Brother Sect Master actually remembers me! My matter of being able to enter the sect was truly thanks to Sect Master's assistance!" When Han Li saw that the sect master had remembered him, he did not panic and instead lightly smiled toward Zhong Lingdao, expressing his thanks.

Having heard the words 'Senior Martial Brother Sect Master', Zhong Lingdao realized this was no longer the rogue cultivator who originally entered the sect but a Foundation Establishment

Cultivator such as himself! Thus, after a brief expression of astonishment, he resumed his calm expression and mildly remarked, “It was nothing. This sect master has handled affairs in accordance to the rules for many years! However, Junior Martial Brother Han was actually able to cultivation to Foundation Establishment with false spiritual roots. It is inconceivable! If this were to spread, Junior Martial Brother would be immediately known throughout the cultivation world!”

Although Zhong Qingdao external appearance seemed to have returned to normal, his words revealed the astonishment in his heart.

This was no surprise, as Sect Master Zhong clearly understood Han Li’s original circumstances. A person with four attribute spiritual roots being able to attain Foundation Establishment was truly hard for him to accept.

Han Li saw this and smiled. With a half-joking tone, he said, “This one did not expect when he took the Foundation Establishment Pill, he would actually reach Foundation Establishment. The only explanation is that I was assisted by the Heavens, which saw a fool like me and gave me outrageous luck!”

When Han Li said this, he actually made the other party laugh!

“But Junior Martial Brother Han, wasn’t your Foundation Establishment Pill given to Junior Martial Disciple Ye’s grandnephew? How did you obtain another Foundation Establishment Pill?” Right after Sect Master Zhong chuckled, he had seconds thoughts on something he didn’t understand and

asked.

“Hehe! Senior Martial Brother Sect Master, didn’t you give me a Foundation Establishment Pill?” Laughing in his heard, Han Li responded to this with chuckle.

“Me?” Zhong Lingdao responded, puzzled. How could he possibly not have any memory of this?

“Could it be that Sect Master has already forgotten? Among the several people who returned alive from the forbidden area, there were three who were awarded a Foundation Establishment Pill. I was one of those people!” Han Li eventually said after putting away his smile.

“You are the in-name disciple accepted by Martial Ancestor Li?” Zhong Lingdao grew excited, longer able to keep his calm appearance,

“That’s right. I am the disciple that Master Li Huayuan accepted on the trip from the forbidden area!” Han Li did not deny, directly acknowledging this.

“So it was like that. So that was why the name ‘Han Li’ sounded so familiar. So it turned out that two years ago, the name of the disciple that everyone was bubbling about belonged to Junior Martial Brother!” Zhong Lingdao’s eyes expressed even more astonishment as he spoke with a slightly more genial tone.

Zhong Lingdao's intentions were clear. Since Han Li had already reached Foundation Establishment, becoming Martial Ancestor Li's official disciple was practically already determined. He naturally did not want to arouse any contempt from Han Li. He inwardly thought to himself, 'Since it was like this, this Junior Martial Brother Han must've reached Foundation Establishment by a complete fluke. Otherwise with his aptitude, Foundation Establishment absolutely wouldn't be possible even out of a hundred times!'

Although Zhong Lingdao truly felt uneasy, he naturally spoke to Han Li with a few courteous words. Then he had Han Li wait a short moment before going to fetch a register.

Han Li naturally agreed and waited for his return.

After the time it took to make a cup of tea, Zhong Lingdao walked out with a white jade slip. Then in front of Han Li, he used a golden brush to write Han Li's name at the very bottom of the densely written list of names. He was finally put into the record!

When Han Li saw this, he grew delighted. He knew that he could now properly have his own Immortal's cave.

Zhong Lingdao regularly conducted various matters for new Foundation Establishment disciples. When he saw Han Li's smiling face, he could somewhat guess what Han Li was thinking. Thus after a faint smile, he took out three mid-grade spirit stones and five small and thin flags that were shrouded in white mist, handing them over to Han Li.

“What is this?”

Han Li could somewhat understand being given mid-grade spirit stones. This was the award for the sect’s Foundation Establishment disciples! But whatever were these five palm-sized flags? There seemed to have Spiritual Qi and felt strange to the touch. It seemed as if they weren’t ordinary magic tools, how strange!

Without waiting for Han Li to ask, Zhong Lingdao held out his hand, handing over a jade slip to Han Li. He then explained, “These spirit stones are a one time reward that is given to all new Foundation Establishment disciples. Every year from now on, you will receive a mid-grade spirit stone without having to do any menial labor!”

“As for these several trace bewildering flags, they are an essential item for establishing your Immortal’s cave. Although they are used to arrange a trace bewildering magic formation, it is the most simple of small scale formation spells. However, it is enough to prevent mortal people and animals from trespassing. Naturally, if Junior Martial Brother is proficient in formation spells, he will not need to use these small flags. Furthermore, the jade slip contains formation establishing arts and controlling techniques. Naturally, a few other matters a Foundation Establishment disciple should be aware of are included within. After Junior Martial Brother leaves, please take a look at them.”

“Thank you for your trouble, Senior Martial Brother Sect Master!” Han Li accepted the jade slip with both hands and

expressed his thanks continuously.

These items were what Han Li currently required the most, hence he was unable to contain his joy!

After these matters were finished, Han Li chatted with Sect Master Zhong for the time it took an incense stick to burn before taking his leave and departing from the main hall.

After departing the stone hall, Han Li thought to fly out of Yellow Maple Valley and look for a place to establish his Immortal's cave.

On his way, however, he looked through the jade slip that Zhong Lingdao had given him and immediately changed his mind. He then turned his flying magic tool to a different area.

“Qilin Pavilion” A rather grand and resounding name. It was one of Yellow Maple Valley's most important locations!

That was because it was the sect's specialized area for raising and taming spirit beasts.

“Spirit beasts” were actually demonic beasts. After these demonic beasts were tamed by cultivators, they would naturally be called spirit beasts!

This Qilin Pavilion's spirit beasts were mostly of grade one. Although there were a few individual grade two spirit beasts, they were left there by others and could not be ordered at will.

However, although there were only grade one spirit beasts, they provided numerous convenient services to the sect's many disciples. For example, transporting people, guarding households, seeking spiritual medicines, aiding in attacking enemies and so on. Han Li had charged over there asking for a spirit beast by the name of "Twin Pupil Mouse".

It resembled a common mouse, but it had the innate divine eyes of a spirit beast. This was what Zhong Lingdao's jade slip had recommended he use as an assistant for finding the optimal place to establish his Immortal's cave.

This intermediate grade one spirit beast's twin pupils were able to easily see through dense fog, rivers, trees and other obstacles hindering a cultivator's line of sight. Furthermore, it was innately fond of burrowing its nest in areas with dense Spiritual Qi.

With some slight training, this Twin Pupil Mouse was an optimal scout for finding spirit eye areas! They were a favorite among the sect's disciples.

This was not the first time Han Li came to Qilin Pavilion. He had previously come several times to handle affairs. He hurried past the front gates, not finding this place to be all that unfamiliar.

He suddenly appeared from the sky, dropping at the base of a small jade-green mountain belonging to the Qilin Pavilion, the wondrous beast mountain's guest welcoming station. A low-level female cultivator immediately walked out to greet Han Li, "Martial

Uncle, are you here to rent a spirit beast?" These words were sharp and clear. This sixteen to seventeen year-old female disciple could not help but look at Han Li with an expectant expression.

Han Li saw this and faintly smiled, saying, "Right now, are there any Twin Pupil Mice available? I wish to rent one for two days!"

"Yes, of course we do! I will go bring one for Martial Uncle!" When the female disciple heard this, she smiled and happily replied.

Chapter 220: Spirit Well Spring

After the female disciple went to retrieve the spirit beast, Han Li quietly waited at the welcoming station, occasionally glancing at the spell restrictions surrounding him.

Apart from the mountaintop that Han Li was at, the other areas on this spirit beast mountain were all contained by individual multi-colored restrictive magic spells; these divided it up into differently sized resting places for spirit beasts.

Every area sealed by the restrictive spells had a domestication place for one kind of spirit beast. Apart from the disciples on duty at the Qilin Pavilion, other people were not allowed to enter. This was because they were afraid that others would startle the spirit beasts, or that the beasts that were not yet domesticated would harm outsiders.

Thus, although the entire Spirit Beast Mountain seemed to be very quiet and peaceful, in reality at least nearly a thousand different spirit beasts lived there; the scale was not so surprising.

That female disciple did not make Han Li wait for long; after the time it took to eat a meal, she walked out of some restricted area with a fist-sized small beast in her bosom, hurrying directly towards Han Li.

“This is the Twin Pupil Mouse; the price of renting it is one low-grade spirit stone every day!” said the female disciple to Han Li respectfully while using a hand to gently stroke the soft fur of the

little beast.

“Okay, here are three spirit stones; I will use it for three days!” said Han Li indifferently to the female.

“After three days, Junior Martial Uncle only needs to release this Twin Pupil Mouse, and it will return to the Qilin Pavilion by itself. During this period of time, I hope that Junior Martial Uncle will treat this beast well. This pouch contains its favorite Earth Pear Fruit; should Junior Martial Uncle find the time, he can feed it a few.” The young woman received the spirit stones, then handed the spirit beast to Han Li and took out a small white pouch as she said to Han Li.

Han Li nodded his head, then freely received it.

Then, under the young woman’s respectful gaze, he flew away on his flying magic tool.

Han Li flew directly northwest.

As Han Li hurried there, he couldn’t help but size up the lovable Twin Pupil Mouse in his bosom.

At a glance, this yellow little beast really seems like a normal earth mouse. The two species both had similar body proportions, the same yellow fur, and a slim, long tail.

The only difference was that its face sported a pair of large eyes,

very different from those of normal mice. Despite this being the only difference, however, it immediately caused this beast to become extremely cute!

The fact that a trace of five-colored light could be seen flashing across its eyes simply served to accentuate this beast's mystique.

Even someone as indifferent as Han Li couldn't help but stroke it a few times when he saw this beast's cute appearance. The idea of whether or not he should also raise a Twin Pupil Mouse emerged in his mind!

However, Han Li was also clear that, despite of this small beast's docile nature, it was nonetheless a genuine intermediate grade one demonic beast.

Thinking to this point, Han Li fiddled with the beast's little ear one more time; after gazing at it shaking about amusingly for a while, he couldn't help but let out a laugh. It was as if the child that had been buried inside of his heart for so long had broken out once again.

Han Li flew in this manner for a day straight before finally stopping at the most northwestern part of the Tai Yue Mountain Range.

Another fifty kilometers north from this location, one would have entered the State of Yuan Wu; that place was the territory of the State of Yuan Wu's great sect, the Heavenly Star Sect. In addition, they had established a market city which rivalled that of

the Yellow Maple Valley.

One hundred kilometers west was the smallest administrative district in the Jian Province and State of Yuan Wu — the boundary of the Xi Province.

This province was also the only place where the Seven Great Sects had not stationed a single garrison. This was because apart from incredibly tall, sandy slopes, the Xi province consisted of a boundless desert that took up greater than three-fourths of its area. The entire combined population of the province was only a hundred thousand people or so; thus, it had no resources or people to use. Naturally, this place would not enter the eyes of the Seven Great Sects.

There were two reasons why Han Li chose to open up a cave near this place.

The first reason was that this desolate location of the Tai Yue Mountain Range bordered the State of Yuan Wu on one side and was near the Xi Province on another side; they were both locations where very few disciples from his sect would pass through. In this way, he wouldn't have anyone to disturb his cultivation.

Second was that this was not far from the Heavenly Star Sect's market city; if he wanted to sell some medicinal ingredients or buy something, he could easily make exchanges here without worrying about being recognized by others!

It was with this train of thought that Han Li picked a location

where the Spiritual Qi was not the best, unlike the caves of other Foundation Establishment disciples, which were all densely packed into locations where the Spiritual Qi was the densest.

Upon descending, Han Li wrapped a slim rope that he had prepared beforehand around the Twin Pupil Mouse's neck to prevent it from running too fast and thus keep him from losing the small thing. Then, he pulled out a yellow, round fruit from the small storage pouch and tossed it to the small beast, allowing it to gnaw on it.

After a moment, the Twin Pupil beast became energized, having demolished the pear. After gently calling out "xu xu" twice, it shot into a nearby patch of grass with a "whizz", disappearing without a trace.

Han Li leisurely followed the rope.

.....

Han Li stood on one side of the arduously steep mountaintop, gazing at the three hundred or so feet tall mountain wall opposite him. He stared at the sight blankly!

This was because the rope on his hand, passing through a narrow hole in the rock, directly extended into the mountain wall facing him.

It was currently the afternoon of the second day. Having gone

through two days of bitter searching, the Twin Pupil Mouse suddenly began to frantically rush forwards the moment it drew near the mountain wall. After rushing Han Li to this location, it slipped into the mountain through the small crack.

Han Li looked at the taut, thin rope in his hand, and his curiosity was greatly piqued. He thought for a moment, then instantly patted his storage pouch, and that huge silver sword appeared in Han Li's hands.

Han Li grasped the rope tightly with one hand and swung the silver sword with the other; in an instant, as if he were cutting tofu, the narrow crack in front of him widened to a rough entrance that a person could crawl through.

After crawling in headfirst, he immediately activated a protective barrier around his body; then, he followed the string, cutting open the mountain rock with each step, slowly progressing. All of the falling pieces of rock and dust were blocked by his water-attribute barrier, keeping his entire body neat and tidy.

This kind of physical work continued for more than an hour, and a thirty-foot-long simple, crude stone tunnel slowly formed. When Han Li hacked again with his sword, a sudden "crash" sounded, and the stone wall was finally broken open.

Han Li was very happy when he saw this. He used enough effort to wildly stab a few times, causing the stone wall to be completely hacked open. Then, he took a big stride out.

A roughly thirty-foot-large naturally formed cave appeared before his eyes. Han Li had just entered this area when a gust of dense Spiritual Qi pounced forwards, causing him to feel greatly stunned!

However, his gaze still followed the rope in his hand, only to see that the thin rope stretched all the way to the center of the cave. There was actually a miniature spring mouth that gurgled with spring water; the Twin Pupil Mouse was actually lying in the middle of this water bed that was a few feet large, contentedly swimming around in it.

“This is?”

This time, Han Li was truly shocked; this was because almost all of the dense Spiritual Qi in this cave came from this spring.

He hurriedly walked over, scooped up a handful of spring water, and began to carefully examine it.

“This is a spirit well spring; there definitely can’t be a mistake!” Without expending too much effort, Han Li confirmed the guess in his heart.

“Even though the Spiritual Qi contained in the spring water is not as exaggerated as rumors suggest and this spring mouth is very small, it truly is a rarely-seen spirit well spring,” Han Li muttered to himself in disbelief, his two hands sticking into the water.

Then, he closed his wells, feeling the strands of Spiritual Qi being emitted from the water. The grin on his face couldn't help but grow wider.

Speaking of spirit springs, one also had to mention spirit veins and spirit wells in the cultivating world!

The Spiritual Qi in the world was not actually evenly distributed; some places were denser in Spiritual Qi, while others were more sparse. Thus, after a long period of time, spirit veins of varying sizes would usually form in areas with dense Spiritual Qi.

Large spirit veins could be tens of thousands of kilometers long, while small ones could be as small as a few kilometers, truly pitifully small. But regardless of size, when these spirit veins were formed, they would automatically release faint amounts of Spiritual Qi, causing the location's Spiritual Qi to circulate unceasingly. Resources in such areas would never dry up.

But in locations with different spirit veins, the amounts of spiritual Qi produced were not necessarily even either. Those locations with the densest accumulation of Spiritual Qi were naturally the most suitable for cultivators to meditate and cultivate at; thus, they were called “spirit wells” by the cultivating world.

The so-called “spirit wells” were generally invisible, and their existences could only be realized by a cultivator's spiritual sense. However, when a location was designated as a spirit well, it was the location in the spirit vein where Spiritual Qi was at its greatest; this was undoubtable!

Although spirit wells were formless under normal circumstances, only acting as a substitute name for any given location, if a spirit well's Spiritual Qi was excessively dense and could be preserved for a long period of time, it would gradually produce a true physical form and become a spirit well object, such as a spirit well pearl, stone, fountain, and the like. There were even the legendary supreme spirit well trees.

The appearance of a spirit well's physical manifestation was a very rarely seen occurrence. Not a single one hadn't experienced numerous tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of years, as well as a stroke of luck, before forming.

Thus, the Spiritual Qi emitted by these true spirit well objects was much denser than that of common spirit wells. Meditating and cultivating near them would definitely have the profound effect of increasing one's rate of cultivation.

The best spirit well objects could even increase one's cultivating speed by twenty or thirty percent. In addition, when these true objects were formed, even spirit well trees or fountains could all be moved away by a person's magic power without having its effectiveness diminished.

Chapter 221: The Heavenly Star Sect And Spell Formations

Spirit well objects were quite miraculous. They would naturally be pursued by all cultivation sects, even to the extreme! Whenever a spirit well object appeared in the cultivation world, it would cause a storm of blood at that location.

In the present cultivation world of the State of Yue, the Seven Great Sects had already acquired a few spirit well objects, but if a small clan or sect were to acquire these treasures, they'd only be inviting a calamity upon themselves.

Yellow Maple Valley had a spirit well stone, three spirit springs, and several other spirit well objects, all of which were bluntly distributed among the Core Formation experts and higher. Even the great Sect Master Zhong was unable to possess one.

Naturally, the great Nascent Soul Martial Ancestor possessed a great number of them.

Han Li absolutely didn't expect with just a common Twin Pupil Mouse, he would have been able to find a nearby spirit well object so easily within the span of a day!

Although this spirit spring was the lowest among spirit well objects, the spring's mouth was pathetically small, and its efficacy was probably limited, a spirit well object was still a spirit well object. At the very least, he would cultivate faster than those at common spirit well locations. So long as it sped up his cultivation

even the slightest, it was still good.

However, even though he was surprised and extremely happy, Han Li still felt a bit puzzled.

Weren't spirit well objects only able to take shape within areas with the densest Spiritual Qi? The Spiritual Qi at this mountain peak wasn't particularly thick, so how was it able to form?

Even so, since the Heaven had dropped him such a great meat pie, Han Li would not let it go.

Although a spirit well spring was able to be moved, only a Core Formation expert would have the means to do so. Anybody on a lower stage of cultivation would not yet have such skills to do so, let alone Han Li. Since he couldn't move it, he decided to establish his Immortal's cave at this location. Thus he planned to make the spirit spring mountain face his own secret training room and keep it well concealed.

Han Li immediately chopped open a passage and carried out an expansion.

With one hand waving the silver sword and the other controlling several gold blades, Han Li undertook the great task of establishing his Immortal's cave. Meanwhile, the Twin Pupil Mouse had plunged itself into the spirit spring and was unwilling to come out. The sounds of its snores could be heard afterwards.

Relying on the silver sword's sharpness and the quantity of golden blades, Han Li labored for half a day, creating a somewhat large premature layout for his Immortal's cave. He carved out thirteen rooms of various sizes and three halls a sixth of an acre large.

Although the cave walls of his rooms were still very coarse, not having undergone any meticulous work, at the very least it could be considered a home! This caused Han Li to let out a breath and relax.

He now suddenly recalled the Twin Pupil Mouse and hastily took advantage of this moment to return to the spirit spring. He picked up the still sleeping small mouse by the nape and flew off a few hundred kilometers before dropping it off, letting it return to Qilin Pavilion by itself.

For the time being, Han Li's Immortal's cave had only one exit. That was why after he returned, he immediately took out several tens of low-grade spirit stones and the five small flags, setting up the small scale trace bewildering formation in accordance to the jade slip and completely concealing the exit with a formation spell. Thus, if someone were to look from the outside, they would see an intact mountain wall. They would essentially be unable to see the cave opening.

After finishing the most basic defenses, Han Li used the silver sword to carve out a simple stone bed. Then he hurriedly lied down, falling asleep. He was truly tired!

For the next several days, Han Li was busy without end.

He found an area of flat earth near his concealed Immortal's cave and planted a few spiritual medicine seeds.

Among these seeds were a few common medicine seeds from the mortal world as well as rare seeds he had gathered from Hundred Medicine Garden after spending several years there. This place was on the verge of becoming Han Li's personal medicine garden, where future spiritual medicine seedlings would sprout and flower.

In the time he had left over, Han Li looked for few solid slabs of bluestones on the mountain, cutting them off and sculpting them into stone tables, desks, and other tools. He then placed a set in each of the rooms. Finally, he meticulously cut smooth the walls and embedded them with a few moonlight stones, causing the inside of the cave to be as bright as day.

Han Li's Immortal's cave was finally established!

Even so, it was clear that the defenses of this Immortal's cave could be easily be destroyed with a single blow. It was truly incapable of allowing Han Li to cultivate with an easy heart. According to his thoughts, he would need a similar comprehensive restriction spell as the one protecting Hundred Medicine Garden, at the very least. Otherwise, if an enemy were to invade as he was cultivating, the consequences would be more than terrible!

Han Li was an amateur at formation spells. He fundamentally couldn't arrange even the most basic of formation spells, let alone

the more difficult restriction spells.

However, he also didn't plan on learning! It should be known that formation spells formed a Dao as vast as the sea. If he were to learn it halfheartedly, he wouldn't have any small success even with ten or twenty years! He absolutely couldn't let it interfere with his cultivation in the slightest, since any wasted time was an intolerable loss!

This world may have a genius that could gain profound insight into formation spells without hindering their cultivation rate, even to the point where such a monstrous cultivation genius could manipulate the Dao of Formation Spells. But Han Li clearly knew that he absolutely wasn't such a person.

For him, if he were even the least bit distracted in that field, then even his slightest hopes of entering Core Formation would be obliterated forever.

But fortunately, this world still had formation flags, formation plates, and other magic tools capable of easily putting down a formation.

Although by using such, one generally wouldn't be able to put down ferocious, large-scale formation spells, Han Li currently only wanted a standard formation spell to defend his Immortal's cave so he that could feel mostly at ease. Besides, if it truly wasn't possible, he would just set several enshrouding formation spells instead. He would make up for the deficiency in defense through quantity.

Han Li planned to go to the Heavenly Star Sect's market city. They were certain to have restrictive type magic tools there.

Thus in the days ahead, after Han Li's several medicinal plants budded, he immediately used the green liquid to expedite their maturation. He planned to use thousand year-old medicine ingredients to exchange for the necessary items at the Heavenly Star Sect's market city. This time, he would only reveal one thousand year-old herb to avoid having others provoke or suspect him, thereby preventing unnecessary troubles.

After a short two months, Han Li matured his medicinal herb by a thousand years.

Then he flew northward with the medicine herb along with some other items he wished to exchange, such as the materials from the Inky Flood Dragon, the hard shell of the centipede as well as other rare materials. If the price was suitable, be it spirit stones or magic tools, he wouldn't mind exchanging them. In any case, he also wouldn't halfheartedly learn how to refine magic tools.

As Han Li flew, he wore a cloak to guard against anything unexpected.

With Han Li's greatly increased magic power, he was able to cover over fifty kilometers in less than half a day.

Entering the State of Yuan Wu, Han Li looked from east to west from up above. He did this not only to look for the Heavenly Star Sect's market city, but also because he felt rather curious about the

State of Yuan Wu. But after looking at the scenery, it didn't seem any different from the State of Yue!

The State of Yuan Wu and the State of Yue were similar. They were both medium-sized nations nearby one another.

Although these two nations were only a third of the size of the great states of Tian Luo and Feng Du, they were still much larger than the small nearby states of Jiang and Cha Yun.

(TL:天罗国 State of Tian Luo, can mean heaven gathering. 风都国 State of Feng Du, can mean wind capital. Jiang and Cha Yun are just names.)

Although these two were the largest nations in the area, they were surrounded by ten other minor nations. As for the smallest nations, there were several tens of those nearby that were densely scattered. Furthermore, rumors had it that in a land far away, there existed a great supreme nation that was large beyond belief!

In the cultivation world of Yuan Wu, the righteous and demonic sects were equal in strength and were in a state of deadlock. The Heavenly Star Sect was one of the core figures of the righteous sects, possessing no less strength than Yellow Maple Valley.

(TL: Reminder, most states are in a war between righteousness and evil. The State of Yue was taken over by neutral powers.)

While Han Li was thinking about the matters of the Heavenly

Star Sect, the leaf magic tool below his feet suddenly sunk, slowly descending to the earth as if it suddenly lost its flight ability.

Seeing these unfavorable circumstances, Han Li not only felt no fear, but he also felt a sliver of happiness. It seemed he had already arrived near the Heavenly Star Sect's market city. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a restriction spell prohibiting flight.

Descended onto the ground, Han Li walked north about four kilometers before coming across a group of buildings somewhat bigger than Yellow Maple Valley's market city.

The Heavenly Star Sect's market city was very strange, and it differed completely from Yellow Maple Valley's market city! At its center, there was a huge pavilion about a hundred meters tall. Scattered around it were several buildings only a tenth of its size, causing the city to emit an appearance of order throughout.

Because the sign attached to the center pavilion was truly too large, Han Li was able to clearly make it out from a kilometer away as "Stardust Pavilion". It seemed there was no need to ask whether this was the personal shop of the Heavenly Star Sect.

In the blink of an eye, Han Li tread the kilometer.

In accordance to habit, Han Li did not move impulsively. Instead, he circled the outer layer of the market city, slowly strolling through once and uncovering the circumstances of the market city.

Needless to say, there were many stores here that widened Han Li's perspective and made him grow eager!

There was a tool refinement room that would accept a cultivator's materials at any time and refine them into magic tools at the owner's request. Furthermore, the store's sign boards were not humble. They actually professed they were capable of refining even top-grade magic tools. Furthermore, if refinement failed, then they would return the value of the materials two-fold in the form of spirit stones. Naturally, if one didn't have materials, they would still be able to order a magic tool, but the price was guaranteed to be far from inexpensive.

There was a different store refining talismans. Its details were nearly similar to that of the tool-refining store, and it similarly made custom talismans!

The others were slightly different. There was a spirit beast institute, specialized in the sale of all kinds of trained demonic beasts. They even had a few advanced grade one demonic beasts. If he were to purchase one as a spirit beast guard, it wouldn't be such a bad idea.

Chapter 222: Tool-Refining Expert

Han Li only saw twenty or thirty cultivators in the outer areas. There didn't seem to be many people in the desolate market.

“Could everyone have gone to the Stardust Pavilion in the center?” Han Li started to mutter somewhat in his heart.

However, he did not intend to immediately head over to the Stardust Pavilion.

That was because that tool-refining store's claim was too arrogant! If the talisman refining store failed, then they would return the material's equivalent twofold in spirit stones! This piqued his curiosity. Thus, when Han Li finished circling around it, he couldn't help but walk inside.

The storefront could not be considered to be large, consisting of only three rooms and an outer courtyard!

When Han Li entered the foremost hall, he saw a middle-aged figure dressed like a Confucian scholar in the midst of a discussion with a white-haired yet red-faced elder. A muscular man with dark skin stood to the side with a respectful expression.

The middle-aged man and the elder were currently fixated on their discussion; although they saw Han Li enter, they indifferently continued their conversation. It was the strong man who did his duty and walked forwards a few steps, then asked very politely:

“Does this guest want to buy magic tools or place an order to have one made?”

“Let me first take a look at the magic tools in your store before deciding whether or not I want to place an order!” Han Li replied evenly.

“Very well. Does this guest want to look at mid-grade or high-grade magic tools?” the muscular man asked happily, seeing that business had actually come to their door.

“Top-grade magic tools! In addition, I want the finest ones amongst all the top-grade magic tools!”

Han Li was not loud, but this sentence immediately shocked the muscular man into a daze! The two people who were talking up a frenzy immediately shut their mouths and stopped talking, instead blankly staring and sizing up Han Li!

“This guest wants to see top-grade magic tools, and even wants the finest ones?” After regaining his senses, the muscular man couldn’t help but confirm whether or not he had heard correctly!

Top-grade magic tools were not something that any ordinary person could buy, frequently costing hundreds of low-grade spirit stones. Average cultivators, even if they saved up spirit stones for their entire lives, might not even be able to buy one, while Han Li had asked to see the best top-grade items right off the bat. Naturally, this explained why the muscular man had lost his self-

control for a moment!

“Little Black, come back! You cannot be disrespectful to this Senior!” That white-haired elder finally recognized Han Li’s identity as a Foundation Establishment cultivator. His expression couldn’t help but change, and he hurriedly commanded the muscular man to retreat.

“This little elder is the owner of this store; if Senior has any business, just say so!”

This elder and that Confucian scholar were still Qi Condensation cultivators; for an “expert” like Han Li to come into a small shop like his, he couldn’t help but feel somewhat unsettled.

“There’s not much. It depends on whether or not your place has any good magic tools. If you have any ones that are suitable, I will buy one or two!” The elder instantly let out a sign after hearing these words from Han Li, but he still spoke somewhat awkwardly:

“Unfortunately we can only disappoint Senior; although my shop does have two or three top-grade magic tools, they are only used to promote this store. They are not actually so extraordinary.” The elder, when faced with a Foundation Establishment cultivator like Han Li, did not dare to conceal anything, and so he could only say the truth.

Upon hearing this, Han Li felt quite disappointed. However, he also couldn’t help but silently berate himself for his stupidity! Even if the sign hung outside of the store were to be even more

exaggerated, it was still only a method for them to attract business; he had actually treated it as if it were true!

Han Li shook his head, and turned around, about to leave. However, when he neared the door, he still turned his head around and spoke somewhat unhappily.

“So you’re saying that the claim that you have the ability to refine top-grade magic tools is also just empty words!”

“No! Senior is mistaken. This small shop does business with integrity; the sign outside is completely true with no falsehoods! As long as you have the appropriate materials, Elder Xu can really refine a top-grade magic tool,” the white-haired elder hurriedly replied, seeing that the shop’s reputation had been involved.

“You can refine top-grade magic tools?” Han Li felt very surprised, and a look of doubt flashed across his eyes. His words were filled with questions.

He had thought that there was someone else who could refine the magic tools; he hadn’t expected it to be this elderly person.

No wonder Han Li didn’t believe it. Refining top-grade magic tools was not like refining mid or high-grade magic tools, which could be refined by common fire. Instead, similar to refining a Foundation Establishment Pill, it required tempering by Earth Fire or Innate True Fire to successfully refine it.

But this elder was only a Qi Condensation cultivator and would not possess Innate True Fire, while this location did not seem like a place with Earth Fire. So how could this person refine a top-grade magic tool?

“This is the first time Senior has come to this elder brother’s shop, so it’s very normal to not understand this! The origins of Elder Brother Xu’s Dao of Tool-refinement originates from his family, and his talent in refining tools is definitely not below that of tool-refining masters from other great sects. In addition, the Xu Family has, for the past few hundred years, taken care of an elementary grade two Fire Raven; the demonic fire it spits out is even somewhat stronger than Innate True Fire, so it’s more than enough to refine top-grade magic tools.” The middle-aged Confucian scholar that had been sitting silently on the side suddenly opened his mouth and explained on behalf of the elder. However, this only increased Han Li’s doubts.

“Demonic fire? I’ve only heard of using True Fire and Earth Fire to refine pills or tools; I’ve never heard that it was also possible with demonic fire!” Han Li explained with some disbelief as he knitted his eyebrows.

“Hehe! There are things that Senior does not know! Using demonic fire to refine tools or even pills requires a few special skills that are not officially recognized by the great sects. It has been thought of as a small, heterodoxical technique and is not very widespread. If our family had not haphazardly obtained this Fire Raven, we also would not take the time to research this path.” The elder continued the Confucian scholar’s words and addressed some of Han Li’s doubts.

“So it’s like that!” Although Han Li had heard the other person’s description, he still had not seen it personally, and so he was still somewhat apprehensive.

“Does Senior also want to order a custom top-grade magic tool?” asked the elder with curiosity, seeing that the other person had lowered their head to ponder over something.

“If I give you enough materials to refine a top-grade magic tool, how much certainty do you have?” Han Li raised his head and asked noncommittally.

“This depends on the quality of the materials as well as the requirements Senior has towards the magic tool. If the materials are average and the requirements for the magic tool are also average, I have a one-third chance of succeeding. However, if the refinement of the top-grade magic tool fails, the store will not refund the materials, because the rates of failure are too high! The twofold compensation is only with regards to mid and high-grade magic tools; otherwise, perhaps this little elder would have already compensated himself to death!” Upon hearing Han Li ask this, the little elder was secretly happy in his heart, and he immediately and respectfully replied.

One had to know that what tool-refinement experts like him lacked the most was high-quality materials to refine with. The process of refining a few top-grade magic tools would greatly increase his tool-refining skill!

In addition, although the individual in front of him did not sound old, he was already a Foundation Establishment cultivator! The

materials he could bring out would definitely not be normal. This caused him to look forward to it very much!

“I do have some materials, and I can let you try to refine them once. However, while you are refining the magic tool, I must be watching from the side. You can rest assured knowing that I will definitely not disturb you, and as long as the refinement is a success, I will give the leftover ingredients to you as a reward! I won’t let you work in vain!” Han Li made up his mind and said the aforementioned words after a moment of silence.

To Han Li, exchanging those precious Inky Flood Dragon materials for spirit stones was not as beneficial as directly refining them into a convenient magic tool!

One had to know that although the number of top-grade magic tools he had currently was high among Qi Condensation disciples, he was unclear about it when compared to Foundation Establishment cultivators! However, he guessed that other people definitely would not have too few either.

“Excellent! Does Senior want to refine it right now? This little elder can begin at any time!” the elder cried out with anticipation, seeing that Han Li really wanted to let him refine a top-grade magic tool. He immediately became excited and agreed to Han Li’s conditions.

“There are still some things I need to buy; when I finish my business, I will come back and we can begin!” Han Li shook his head and added after hearing this.

“Okay then! In that case, Junior will wait for Senior!” The elder, seeing that Han Li did not seem to want to let him begin his work immediately, couldn’t help but feel somewhat disappointed, but immediately afterwards, he recovered his state of mind. The elder said this respectfully.

Knowing that everything had been arranged, Han Li did not want to stay here any longer. After casually saying goodbye, he turned around and walked out of the store.

But before he had even walked a few tens of feet away from the store, the voice of the Confucian student suddenly came from behind him.

“Senior, please stop for a moment!”

Han Li’s figure paused; after hesitating for a moment, he stopped moving. Then, he turned around and saw the Confucian scholar chasing behind him. At this time, he was looking at Han Li with a face full of smiles.

“Is there something you need?” Han Li knitted his eyebrows and asked coldly.

He did not really like people who disturbed him for no reason.

“This Junior wanted to ask Senior if you came to this market intending to buy something. This Junior’s name is Wang Ziling,

and I am often around this market. Perhaps my help can save Senior a significant amount of time!”

Hearing this, Han Li sized up the Confucian student with some confusion; suddenly, he lightly smiled and asked:

“Are you a frequent hire?”

Although the Confucian scholar couldn’t see Han Li’s expression clearly due to the cloak, he could clearly hear the laughter in Han Li’s voice, and his heart loosened up. He immediately replied:

“Senior guessed correctly; this Junior occasionally spends his time there. I am not exclusively hired by that one store, so Senior can feel free to relax!”

Han Li somewhat carelessly nodded his head, but he indifferently said:

“Although I don’t mind whether or not you are specifically hired by the store, this time I want to buy a few formation flags and formation plates. It seems like the best decision is to go to the Stardust Pavilion. I don’t think that I need any help!”

Chapter 223: Secret Store, Auction

When the Confucian scholar heard Han Li's words, he stared blankly for a moment before immediately smiling. Then he joyfully said, "Senior, it is fortunate that you've told me this, else you would have gone on a trip in vain! Although the fame of the Heavenly Star Sect's formation spells is quite renown, this does not apply to the Stardust Pavilion's top formation flags and formation plates. Although there are many and various formation flags and formation plates inside the Stardust Pavilion, they are only common rubbish sold to small cultivator clans and rogue cultivators. Formation spell tools of true quality are not released by the Heavenly Star Sect. This is because if their finest spell formation items were released to outsiders, the gaps in their formation could be seen through. As they say, the gains do not make up for the losses!"

As the Confucian scholar was explaining off to the side, he stole a look at Han Li. However, the hood of Han Li's cloak prevented his face from being seen, and so the scholar couldn't make out the slightest of emotion, much to his great frustration.

"From your tone, it sounds as if you know where I can find the items I want!" Although Han Li was greatly surprised from the Confucian scholar's words, he still maintained his flat, calm tone, completely hiding his inner shock.

When the Confucian scholar heard this, he first looked left and right several times. After there was no one around, he secretly whispered, "If Senior believes this Junior, he can introduce you to a secret store that very few know about. Although that location has a small issue about its past history, all of its goods are high quality

and rarely seen! I believe that Senior will certainly be able to find satisfactory formation spell tools there.”

“Secret store?”

Although Han LI’s voice was still low, he was actually inwardly startled by the Confucian scholar’s words.

In the past several years, Han Li had heard rumors of a secret store once or twice. Han Li knew that if the Confucian scholar spoke truthfully, this would be a truly rare chance to broaden his horizons.

“It seems that Senior also know a bit about the secret store. Hehe! This is great. In that case, there’s no need for Junior to waste time explaining. There are probably still four to six hours left before the secret store’s monthly auction. If Senior wishes to go, please decide soon. I will be able to immediately show you the way!”

When the Confucian scholar saw Han Li display no disgust upon the mention of the secret store, he could not help but secretly rejoice. He knew that chasing after this client was most likely the correct course of action for him to take.

“It isn’t too far?” Han Li suddenly asked.

“It isn’t far. The secret store is within the market city. Does Senior approve?” The Confucian scholar grew a bit excited. By

giving the secret store a potential customer, he was able to reap a significant percentage in spirit stones.

“Let’s go!” After he let out a relaxed breath, Han Li’s tone was no longer cold.

“This one will lead the way!” The Confucian scholar had a happy expression and took the initiative to lead.

After the Confucian scholar turned seven corners, he brought Han Li in front of a small lodge. The door was secured, and there was no sign on the door. It seemed very unremarkable.

The Confucian scholar lightly knocked on the door with a certain rhythm. In response, the door opened. A woman about thirty years old walked out. This woman’s looks were average, and her cultivation was only at the sixth or seventh layer of Qi Condensation, truly unremarkable.

“Lady Zhang, this one brings a new customer. He also wishes to participate in the auction.” Wang Ziling did not wait for the woman to speak and hastily introduced Han Li with great energy.

After Lady Zhang heard Wang Ziling say he brought a customer, she did not show an expression of joy but scowled instead, as if she wasn’t in agreement. But after she took a clear look and saw that this customer was a Foundation Establishment cultivator, her expression changed to a slight smile.

“This time, you’ve brought a proper customer rather than the trash you previously brought! A Foundation Establishment Senior! Senior, please come in!” Although this woman’s cultivation was very low, she didn’t look at Han Li with any reverence. Instead, she seemed to consider Han Li an ordinary customer.

“Senior, this one can only bring you to this location. He will first take his leave!” Wang Ziling blushed from the woman’s words and hurried to say his farewell to Han Li.

After seeing the Confucian scholar’s figure disappear into the distance, the woman stepped to the side, signaling Han Li to enter.

After he entered, he saw that all sorts of shoddy materials for pill and tool refinement were arranged out for display like an ordinary raw materials shop.

Han Li carefully observed the woman, who closed the door and then respectfully said, “Please follow me, sir.”

With that said, the woman took a few steps to the corner of the room. She then pressed her hand against the ground.

Yellow light flashed from her hand, when all of a sudden a large hole opened from the ground. The woman called out to Han Li, indicating that he was to follow her lead.

After a moment of slight hesitation, Han Li walked into the tunnel and cautiously followed. However, the ever cautious Han Li

naturally stayed on guard.

The tunnel was very short. After about thirty meters, there was a somewhat small stone door. Two black-clothed men stood in front of either side of the door, each wearing a devil's mask.

After Han Li took a look at the two black-clothed men, his expression immediately grew heavy. They were actually Foundation Establishment cultivators like him! Furthermore, one of them was mid-stage Foundation Establishment. Han Li could not help but be wary of this store's strength.

The woman pushed through the stone door as if she hadn't seen the black-clothed men and brought Han Li inside. The two black-clothed men also turned a blind eye, neither speaking nor obstructing them.

After Han Li entered the room, he grew distracted. A large, majestic hall appeared before his eyes.

Vermillion fur rugs, snow-white jade walls, palace lanterns hanging from the ceiling... all of this gave off an appearance of the greatest wealth from the mortal world. It seemed the owner of this room was quite wondrous!

The large hall was shaped as an oval with a diameter of about a hundred meters. Seven or eight lines of chairs were arranged in the hall with several tens of uniquely dressed cultivators seated upon them. Across from them was a lone, empty table, not far from which were three sandalwood chairs.

Seeing Han Li and the woman enter, the people sitting could not help but look in their direction.

After those gazes swept past Han Li, he felt his body quiver with a cold sweat. His expression greatly changed. More than half of those people were cultivators in late-stage Foundation Establishment!

At this moment, Han Li realized why the woman at his side did not show any semblance of reverence toward him. At this place, he was but a common sight!

“Your esteemed self has come at a good time! The auction was about to start. This small woman will no longer accompany you; I must return upward to take care of a few matters!”

Han Li helplessly looked at the several cultivators in the hall and silently looked for a remote corner before sitting down.

At this moment, he already noticed that the cultivators here were concealing their faces like him, using cloaks to hide their true features. It seemed no one was so stupid enough to let others discover their identity.

Although the people in the hall weren't few in number, no one was speaking. The incomparable silence caused the air to carry a trace of tension.

When Han LI saw this, he also remained extremely well-behaved. Aside from some malicious guesses of any acquaintances he would recognize here, he wholeheartedly paid attention to the wooden door directly behind the long table. It seemed that the owner should be preparing behind that door.

After Han Li sat there for five to six hours, the wooden door behind the table finally opened. Three people walked out one by one.

From their appearance, they seemed identical to the guards at the stone door. It was unable to see who was master and servant.

At this moment, they stood behind the long table. The person standing on the right first spoke with a low and hoarse voice, "Welcome to our trade fair, fellow Daoists of the cultivation world. Among our current customers, there are old and regular customers as well as newcomers. But this does not matter, as this store treats everyone equally!"

When the person on the right finished, the person on the left immediately started talking, "This trade fair is completely fair. When someone shouts out a price in spirit stones, everyone must use spirit stones to compete. If someone doesn't have sufficient spirit stones, they will be able to use an item of equivalent value as collateral. As for its specific worth, all three of use will jointly evaluate it. In short, the highest price will acquire the item on sale." This person's voice was completely different. It was shrill and quiet, very much falsetto, causing those who heard it to feel at great unease.

“Finally, after all the items in the store have been sold, everyone is free to conduct business during this time. If there are any items you wish to sell or exchange, you will be able to step forward and present them at will and trade them independently. We will not meddle in the slightest and will only offer the place to conduct business. Alright, everything has been said. Let the trade fair begin!”

The middle person’s voice was actually simple and loud, resonating throughout the room.

Following these words, the three flashed to the side, appearing on the sandalwood seats behind the table. At this moment, a very tall and thin middle-aged man with a shrewd appearance walked out from the wooden door.

This man walked to the table and coughed several times before declaring, “This auction will be directed by me. The first item for auction will be the top-grade magic tool, Fire Cloud Sword. This item...”

Chapter 224: Mechanical Puppet Beasts

The first item being auctioned was a rather powerful top-grade magic tool, causing Han Li to feel somewhat surprised.

This was especially because this articulate tall, thin figure had colorfully and dynamically described the magic tool as unparalleled and hard to find on the earth. Even Han Li, when he heard it, had a slight impulse of pulling out his spirit stones to buy it, not to mention other cultivators who desperately lacked top-grade magic tools.

As expected, the base price of two hundred spirit stones had just been revealed when three or four impatient individuals immediately called out bids. In the blink of an eye, this Fire Cloud Sword's price had been raised to more than three hundred spirit stones, causing the other cultivators, who had originally also wanted to call out a price, to immediately extinguish this train of thought!

Although the fire cloud attacks of the Fire Cloud Sword weren't too bad, it was obviously one step inferior to a top-grade magic tool of true quality! Spending three hundred spirit stones for it seemed to be somewhat in poor taste.

However, even if there were people unwilling to buy it, naturally there were others willing to be taken advantage of!

To the people who were willing to buy it, although the items that would be auctioned off later would be finer in quality, there was no

way for them to obtain it. It was better and more realistic for them to buy the decent top-grade magic tool in front of them.

Thus, this Fire Cloud Sword reached a price of four hundred spirit stones due to the contentions between a few Qi Condensation cultivators; it was sold off relatively successfully.

The cultivator wearing a doll mask happily returned to his seat after turning in his spirit stones, holding the sword in his hands. It seemed like he was going to take it home and make it his family heirloom. This caused other cultivators to think that it was somewhat humorous.

The tall and skinny figure waited for the person to return to his seat, then cleared his throat and said:

“The second item this store will auction is naturally a tool-refinement master’s greatest love, a top-grade Red Sky Gathering Furnace. This furnace has been passed down through the hands of many great tool-refinement masters; it is an exquisite item that has refined many top-grade items, such as the Phantom Sound Sword, Azure Flood Dragon Banner, Black Flame Pearl, and many others. From hearsay, this furnace has the ability to grant additional properties when refining tools. However, as for whether this claim is true or not, even this store does not know! Thus, the base price is four hundred spirit stones, which is definitely not a high price.

As the man spoke, he pulled out a fire-red pill furnace from his storage pouch and placed it on the table for everyone to see

With a boom, the atmosphere in the room erupted even though none of the cultivators in the room had spoken yet. Many people were staring dead-on at the pill furnace with fiery gazes; evidently, they all fancied this item.

Han Li quietly sat in the corner, coldly watching all of that was happening. When he heard that the Azure Flood Dragon Banner in his hand also came from this furnace, he couldn't help but feel quite shocked; however, this was only shock!

He knew nothing about refining tools, so he naturally would not know the price range for this pill furnace. He definitely would not make a move if it was an item that he didn't know how to use! Han Li could do at least this much. In addition, although the number of spirit stones he had were not low in number, he still had to save them for crucial moments!

“Four hundred and fifty!”

“Four hundred and seventy!”

“I put forth five hundred spirit stones!”

“.....”

No matter how Han Li thought, the price of this pill furnace, named the “Red Sky Gathering Furnace” skyrocketed to a frightening amount in no time!

“Seven hundred eighty stones!”

This was the bid that a fat-figured person wearing a yellow cloak on his head called out, gritting his teeth!

“Eight hundred!”

A female cultivator not too far away from the fatty, leisurely called out an even higher bid, causing the fatty to grip his hands tightly together.

Before his eyes, the prices became sky high. The others had already given up on bidding. They could only look on with unwillingness and watch the two arrogant Foundation Establishment cultivators continue to shout out increasingly large prices.

“Eight hundred and fifty pieces! If this lady can call out a bid higher by even one spirit stone, this pill furnace will be given to you!” The fatty said viciously as he raised the price again, staring at the female cultivator with an angry expression.

“Eight hundred and fifty-one!”

The fat cultivator’s words had just left his mouth when the female cultivator laughed coldly and intentionally called out a number one figure higher. This caused the fat cultivator’s big face, which was hidden inside the cloak, to appear as red as blood. But after furiously shooting a poisonous expression at the other person

for a brief moment, he actually did not call out another bid.

Just like that, this Foundation Establishment female cultivator spent a very high price and bought this famous pill furnace; even so, was it worth the amount she paid?

Perhaps this time's bidding was too fierce, and it stimulated the nerves of all of the cultivators. Just like that, the originally cold atmosphere in the room instantly heated up, and all the top-grade magic tools and precious materials were completely gobbled up by all of the enthusiastic cultivators.

But after twenty or so items had been sold off, Han Li had still yet to see items like the formation flag or formation plate for sale, causing him to grow impatient.

Han Li couldn't help but silently think that if none of the items he needed appeared in this auction, he might actually have to make a trip to the Stardust Pavilion. Even buying a few of the most basic spell formation tools was better than having none at all!

Just as Han Li was thinking, the skinny and tall man in front listed the name of the next item being auctioned.

“Top-grade magic tool, a pair of mechanical puppet beasts! Its strength is comparable to that of a ninth layer Qi Condensation disciple. In addition, it is completely faithful and will defend its owner to the death! If you buy this item, it's like having two personal bodyguards around you at all times. The base price is only a hundred spirit stones!”

“Mechanical puppet beasts? Isn’t my own top-grade magic tool also called a Puppet Bowman? Could they be the same kind of object?” Han Li’s heart moved, and he sat up straight. He began to watch attentively.

The skinny tall male had already brought out two shiny black doll-like objects! They were only as large as a fist, and their appearance seemed to somewhat resemble a lion or a tiger, but that similarity was limited; one did not know what kind of strange beast they were based on.

“There are many guests who have probably not heard of, or very rarely heard of, the Dao School of mechanical puppets!”

This is a kind of Dao magic that originates from refining magic tools, yet it is completely different from a magic tool. Although not many of us here know this, this magic is incredibly popular in the westernmost regions. There is even a sect called the Thousand Bamboo School that relied on this to establish their sect, and they have already developed this Dao technique to an extreme. Rumors have it that top-level mechanical puppeteers can contend with late-stage Foundation Establishment cultivators! In addition, rating these mechanical beasts as top-grade magic tools was this store’s decision, when in reality, according to the official classification of mechanical magics, they should be considered grade two puppet beasts!”

Seeing the cultivators below did not seem interested in these mechanical beasts and noticing the awkward silence when no one called out a price, this man hurriedly recited the speech that he

had memorized beforehand all at once, hoping to pique the cultivators' interest.

Although the cultivators below had become somewhat curious after he had finished speaking, no one was willing to do something as silly as pay a hundred spirit stones to buy two doll-like items! In addition, what use would two bodyguards at the ninth layer of Qi Condensation be to the cultivators present?

“One hundred spirit stones!”

A noise sounded out from the corner; there was actually a person who wanted to buy this toy! Instantly, all of the cultivators' gazes turned towards that corner.

However, this person was not Han Li; rather, it was some person with a covered face sitting in another corner. He had covered his entire head with a large grey bag, appearing to be an extremely ridiculous and strange person!

“A hundred and fifty spirit stones!”

Just as other cultivators felt that the strange person was being wastefully extravagant, the sound of another strange, stiff voice calling out a price resounded in the room.

Now, all of the cultivators in the room were stunned and couldn't help but glance towards the person who had called out the new price.

A burly person wearing a green cloak sat in the last row of seats, his hands hugging his shoulders. The sound of a new price came from this person's mouth. When all of the people glanced at this person, this person actually stared back at them coldly, not revealing any trace of uneasiness!

“Two hundred spirit stones!”

“I will pay three hundred pieces!”

“Four hundred!”

“Six hundred!”

.....

In the blink of an eye, these two people raised the price of the puppet beasts one after another to an unbelievable price!

At this time, even if the many cultivators in the room were more stupid, they would be able to tell that something was off!

“Could this pair of puppet beasts be hiding some frightening secret?” At this time, this kind of a thought was rising up in all of the cultivators' hearts.

All the cultivators in the room glanced at each other a few times,

and their hearts began to beat loudly. There were even a few financially strong and hasty individuals who directly entered the bidding.

However, a few older cultivators were still somewhat suspicious even as their hearts stirred.

These two people couldn't have been secretly hired by the store, could they?! Could they have purposefully raised the price of this unprofitable item to incite the rest of them to spend excessively?

The cultivators thinking of this were not few in number, and Han Li was one of the most skeptical ones. Thus, he continued to indifferently watch on, seemingly unmoved in any way.

“I will pay nine hundred spirit stones with the addition of this item!”

Seeing the number of cultivators participating in the auction increasing, the burly, strange man panicked in his heart, and he actually pulled out an item from his storage pouch. Then, he took a few large steps forward and stood before the skinny, tall man, placing it on the table. He used a rough tone of voice to say:

“This kind of an item is worth many thousands of spirit stones! It's more than enough to exchange for these puppet beasts; quickly give them to me!”

Chapter 225: Iron Essence, Spirit Medicines

Seeing that the situation was about to get out of hand, the skinny tall male had quickly retrieved the pair of puppet beasts into his storage pouch!

Now, seeing that the burly man had pulled out a black, junk-metal-like object in order to force him to bring out the auction items that had soared in price, he couldn't help but roll his eyes and say impolitely:

“Everybody, please calm down! You there, we will appraise the item's worth ourselves, but for now it is more appropriate for you to return to your seat and sit down! Otherwise, this store will assume that you are purposefully creating trouble, and we won't be polite to you anymore!”

Upon hearing the thin, tall man's threatening words, the burly man grew very angry at first.

In his own sect, he was a person with a great identity. When faced with this kind of annoyance, tens of thousands of people would respond to his call! He immediately raised his fists and was about to break out in anger!

However, when that person glanced at the strange figure wearing a hood on his head, he discovered that the other person was watching him like a statue; a trace of gloating flitted across his eyes, causing the burly man's heart to quiver! After thinking better of it, he actually forcefully restrained the anger in his heart,

suddenly turning around and returning to his seat.

Some cultivators who had thought that they would see an entertaining scene play out couldn't help but feel somewhat disappointed.

The auction of the puppet beasts was going to continue! However, that black item had already been handed to the trio sitting on the sandalwood chairs. At that time, they were discussing the item in low tones. Although their exact expressions were unclear because they were wearing masks, their solemn attitude was clearly seen by all of the cultivators!

That palm-sized, black piece of foundry iron was examined thoroughly multiple times by the three figures before they finally reached a unanimous decision. Then, a black-clothed person stood up in their midst and loudly declared:

“One piece of high-quality iron essence, worth two thousand spirit stones!”

Then, that person returned to his seat without saying another word.

“Iron essence?”

The cultivators who heard these two words couldn't help but feel shock in their hearts! The person who had wanted to call out another price immediately shut his mouth tight, unwilling to say

another word!

Everybody thought with consternation, could this fellow actually be a Core Formation expert? Otherwise, where did he obtain the iron essence!

This was a magic treasure material that could only be refined by a Core Formation expert's Dan fire. Under normal circumstances, cultivators who finished refining this ingredient would immediately assimilate it into their own magic treasures to raise its strength! They would not allow this kind of material to be easily spread out.

If even a tiny bit of this iron essence magic treasure ingredient were to be mixed into a regular magic tool, its strength would greatly increase; even raising a grade was not an impossibility! Thus, the value of this ingredient was outrageous!

The burly man from earlier, could he be a Core Formation cultivator who had purposefully suppressed his aura and pretended to be at the Foundation Establishment stage?! Low-level cultivators could not tell the depth of a Core Formation cultivator!

Just when all of the cultivators were frightened in their hearts and had many suspicions...

The skinny, tall man, under the prompting of the three people behind him, finally opened his mouth again and shouted:

“Is there anyone else who is willing to place a bid above two thousand nine hundred? If not, this pair of puppet beasts will all belong to to this brother!”

The skinny, tall man seemingly still wanted to pull the price slightly higher; thus, he purposefully uttered these words leisurely, obviously intending to stall for time.

But which cultivator in the large room still dared to randomly call out prices!

Since these people were able to attend this time’s auction, they naturally were not common characters. Either they were important figures from a cultivator clan or they had reached the Foundation Establishment stage; however, when faced with a suspected Core Formation expert, which one of them dared to ask for trouble?

In addition, even if this person was not a Core Formation cultivator, this person at least had a Core Formation expert backing him. Thus, even if one coveted the puppet beast’s secrets, there was no one who was willing to signal themselves out, so they could only stare at the treasure.

The strange person who had gone tit for tat with him from the beginning similarly sat without saying a word. Nobody knew if he had been frightened by that piece of iron essence or if he was embarrassingly short of money and simply couldn’t pull out that many spirit stones.

Upon hearing about the iron essence, Han Li also felt very shocked. That cheap master of his had lost two pieces of iron essence to Senior Eccentric Qiong. At that time, seeing his master's depressed expression, he knew that this item was extremely precious and valuable.

Just like that, this pair of puppet beasts fell into the burly man's hands without any further contest. When he received the puppet beasts, he was so excited that his hands shook slightly!

However, this provoked the cultivators' recklessness even more. A large portion of them even wished that they could just seize it in order to precisely research the secrets hidden within!

After receiving the puppet beasts, the burly man wearing a cloak immediately left his seat and walked towards the stone doors, but when he reached them, he discovered that the stone doors had actually been tightly shut from the outside! He forcefully pushed on the door twice, but it did not budge an inch!

“What is the meaning of this!”

“Could it be that even though I bought an item, I'm still not allowed to leave?” The man's tone of voice became somber; his accent, which was already somewhat strange, became even more pronounced and uncomfortable to hear.

“Of course not! When the trades finish, we will immediately open the doors and allow you to leave. However, we cannot do so right now.” The person who spoke directly at this moment was not the

skinny, tall man running the auction, but rather the black-clothed person sitting on the left.

“What? What kind of reasoning is this? I want to leave this place immediately!” The man began to rage, and his voice grew increasingly loud.

“Regretfully, this truly is this store’s rule. We use some of these methods to prevent any kinds of unfortunate accidents from occurring! Sir, surely it can’t be that you can’t even wait this small amount of time!” With a low, hoarse voice, the black-clothed person on the right exclaimed in a very gloomy manner.

“Hmph! Of course I can continue to wait; do you think that I’m afraid of you? I was just wanting to see what other good items would come out next!” This male suddenly seemed to have thought of something, and his attitude abruptly changed; he actually confidently returned to his seat.

This caused the other people to stare blankly, feeling greatly shocked. What ideas had this person come up with? Did he not know that the longer he stayed in this place, the greater the danger he faced!

At this time, the majority of the cultivators present had already seen that this person truly was in the Foundation Establishment realm. Otherwise, how could he be content with being put into his place? However, the secret store’s representatives had seemingly known the actual situation of the burly man from the beginning and didn’t seem to have any intentions of backing down!

Since the burly man did not leave, the auction in the room continued! However, the hearts of the majority of the people did not return to the auction; there was actually the cold scene of two items in a row being auctioned without a single person calling out a bid. This caused that skinny, tall man to begin feeling incredibly awkward.

However, this auction had also neared its end. The really precious items and the climax of the auction had finally begun!

“Top-grade spiritual medicine, one thousand year-old Yellow Essence Mushrooms. I will not say any more superfluous words. Everyone here is most likely even clearer than I am about this medicinal herb’s value!”

The skinny, tall man had just finished saying this when a green jade box appeared in his hand.

Then, he put on an act and glanced at all of the cultivators; seeing that everyone’s attention had been attracted by the thousand-year-old herbal medicine, he said, secretly happy:

“This thousand year-old spirit medicine has only appeared a few times in the past hundred years; buying it to refine spiritual pills will definitely result in realm-shattering creations. It is the optimal opportunity to greatly increase one’s magic power. Thus, the base price starts from five hundred spirit stones!”

Having said this, the skinny, tall man pulled off the lid to the jade

box, then picked it up and showed the medicinal herb to the cultivators.

In an instant, a thick, medicinal fragrance filled the entire large room, causing the cultivators to feel both surprised and happy!

They were surprised because they had never expected that this kind of unique treasure would appear at this auction! They were happy because if they were able to buy it and use it to refine medicine, it would be exactly like the other person had said—better than any top-grade magic tool! After all, what was being raised was one's own magic power, instead of any kind of borrowed, external power!

Thus, after the skinny, tall man mentioned the base price, someone impatiently opened their mouth!

“A thousand spirit stones!”

As soon as one cultivator opened his mouth, the price of this spiritual herb had doubled! This caused many people who wanted to call out a price to be infuriated to the point of shouting abuse at them incessantly! However, immediately afterwards, people continued to raise the price.

“A thousand two hundred spirit stones!”

“A thousand.....”

.....

The people calling out prices continued one after another; in the blink of an eye, it broke through the large bottleneck of two thousand. Meanwhile, Han Li was staring at the thousand year-old spiritual medicine on the table in a trance!

When he first heard about the thousand year-old spiritual herb, he did not pay much attention to it. He only thought that a thousand-year old herb had been discovered in another location.

However, when the skinny, tall man showed off the thousand year-old Yellow Essence Mushroom in the box, Han Li immediately determined that the purported top-grade spiritual medicine was actually one of the two that he had sold to the Ten Thousand Treasure Store earlier. This was because he had personally raised this spiritual medicine, so how could he not recognize it?

However, since the spiritual medicine was already in the hands of the Ten Thousand Treasures Store, Han Li wouldn't worry himself about the matter anymore! Thus, after slightly blanking out for a while, Han Li regained consciousness, watching the many cultivators fight with one another as if nothing had happened.

Hearing the rapid auctioning noises from these cultivators, Han Li felt somewhat self-satisfied in his heart!

After all, to have an item that one previously possessed cause other people to be so frantic could also be considered a source of pride!

Chapter 226: Five Elements Reversal Formation

A few cultivators quickly ran out of spirit stones on hand, and one by one, they started to put up a few rare goods as collateral. In addition, each item became increasingly expensive and rare, causing Han Li to feel overwhelmed!

“I’ll use my Five Elements Reversal Formation establishment set in exchange for that spiritual herb!”

It was unknown who suddenly said those nervous words that caused the rowdy and disorderly cultivators to become quiet.

It wasn’t because this person voice was loud, but because he uttered the truly famous name of “Reversal Five Elements Formation”. It was a name known to nearly everyone that there were few who did not know! In a few aspects, this formation was absolutely more valuable to a few cultivator clans and cultivator sects than the thousand year-old spiritual medicine.

Apart from covering a small area and having no offensive power, this reputed restrictive formation spell could transform and conceal a sect mountain, confusing and trapping enemies. It wasn’t weaker than the large protective formations of those great sects in the slightest.

If their own clan or sect had such a wondrous formation, they would have no reason not to use it.

However, it was said that if one were not a great formation spell master experienced with this kind of impressive restrictive spell, one would have to spend about a year of hard work and a great amount of labor and resources and still not be able to set it up, not to mention turning such a wondrous formation into a magic tool!

If this were true, this auction would be a truly wondrous matter that would greatly broaden one's horizons!

When Han Li heard this, a lively expression flashed through his eyes, and his spirit was moved. He then turned his head to look at the person who spoke those words.

It was an extremely unremarkable Qi Condensation disciple with a short and thick stature wearing a tiger mask. It was truly not the person one would expect of someone that would possess such a wondrous item! However, a bit of anxiety could be seen from his eye.

“Your esteemed self possesses a Five Elements Reversal Formation establishment set?” After a moment of surprise, the tall and thin man asked this calmly as he sized up the youth with a gaze full of suspicion. Although he didn't seem very convinced, if the other party truly possessed this formation spell magic tool, the thousand year-old medicine herb would naturally go uncontested to this person.

When the other cultivators heard this, they all waited to hear the youth's reply.

“I have it, but as of now, it is incomplete. It can only bring out a tenth of the spell formation’s strength. But if you were to agree to give this one the medicine herb, this one will guarantee that within several years, he will be able to multiply the might of the formation establishment tools to at least half of its proper strength.” When the youth saw so many people look at him, he could not help but panic a bit, As a result, he stuttered out the true matter with regards to the thousand year-old medicine herb.

“So it wasn’t true and was instead a defective experiment!” When the many cultivators heard this, they were greatly disappointed. Originally, if he truly had this magic tool, they would have bid even greater amounts of spirit stones for it. But now that that it was known to be defective, there was naturally no interest!

The formation masters of the cultivation world were far rarer than pill and tool-refining experts! This was because one must decide to deeply study formations to the point where one would even abandon the Great Dao! After all, a person had limited energy. Within a finite amount of time, it was impossible to simultaneously cultivate and delve into the profoundness of formation spells.

Thus, there were people who decided to find the spell formation master backing the youth after the termination of the trade fair.

After all, a spell formation master capable of researching such a wondrous formation spell magic tool would certainly be capable of laying out a spell formation on site! As for those from a few clans

and small sects, so long as they were able to protect a few vital areas with this wondrous formation, even if it wasn't in the form of a mobile magic tool, it made no difference!

“Could it be that your esteemed self is joking!? We are an auction. Who has any reason to wait several years for results! Since I see that you are young, I will drop it this time! The next time you carelessly bid falsely, do not blame this store's representatives for being impolite!” When the thin and tall man heard those empty words, his face immediately sunk, and he replied harshly.

When the short, coarse youth saw this, his exposed mouth quivered as if he wanted to say something. However, the man in charge of the action paid him no more heed and turned his head, causing the youth to let out a long sigh and helplessly sit back down.

When Han Li saw this, he narrowed his eyes. After carefully looking at the youth several times, he firmly memorized the youth's manner of dress and figure.

At this moment, the thousand year-old herb had reached the price of two thousand spirit stones with the addition of several false moonstones from a Foundation Establishment cultivator.

That tall and sturdy man who exchanged the iron essence for the puppet beast did not immediately leave. He actually sat leisurely in his chair as if he wanted to participate in the free trade. But instead, the strange person concealed underneath the hood immediately hurried out as soon as the stone doors opened. This caused a few who were observing from the side to be puzzled.

Han Li didn't trouble himself over this matter and instead looked after matters pertaining to himself! He originally planned to wait until the period of free trade to look for the short, coarse youth and see whether or not he could acquire the formation establishment magic tool.

Although the "Five Elements Reversal Formation" establishment tool could only recreate a tenth of its original strength, It was enough for Han Li's purposes.

After all, he had heard of the grand reputation of this wondrous formation and was convinced that Immortal's cave.

But Han Li did not expect that when he looked in the direction of the youth, he would be immediately surrounded by four to five cultivators wanting to discuss some matters with him.

This unexpected situation caused Han Li to feel a bit annoyed. At the same time, he was a bit anxious. Could it be that they were the same as him, also wanting to purchase that incomplete formation establishment set?

However, Han Li's worry was unfounded!

After those people chatted a bit with the youth, they looked at each other in dismay, immediately shaking their heads and leaving. The only person who remained was the short, coarse youth, dejectedly standing there with a hung head.

Han Li grew greatly delighted and walked several steps forward. He then coughed and thought of what to say. However, without waiting for him to speak or even taking a look at him, the short, coarse youth dejectedly said, “If you do not have a thousand year-old spiritual medicine, then please do not disturb me! The spell formation master backing me immediately requires a spiritual medicine to save his life! Currently, we cannot give you any large formations!”

When Han Li heard this, he felt greatly surprised. But then he said this with a light smile, “What if I have a thousand year-old spiritual medicine but do not wish to find a spell formation master to set down a formation?” He said this with a joking chuckle.

This youth was only a Qi Condensation at the beginning of the tenth layer. Han Li had no need to be wary of him and thus spoke as he wished.

“Senior has spiritual medicine?” This youths consciousness was immediately roused and looked happily toward Han Li.

Han Li did not immediately reply and instead looked in every direction.

It seemed as if no one was paying attention to this location. The other cultivators were looking at the others displaying their magic tools for trade.

“Shall we go somewhere else to have a chat? There are too many

people here!” Han Li softly said, pointing to an unremarkable corner.

“Yes, of course!”

The short, coarse youth agreed without the slightest hesitation. They walked over to the nearby corner and were twenty meters away from the nearest cultivator. After Han Li set up a soundproof barrier with ease, they didn’t need to worry about others eavesdropping.

With this said, ever since Han LI reached Foundation Establishment, he immediately mastered the minor magic techniques he previously couldn’t use in the slightest! He had transcended realms from his previously clumsy and slow incapacibilities, causing Han Li to feel happy for a long while. This soundproof barrier was a minor magic technique he learned in passing.

“Senior truly has a spiritual medicine? It must be a thousand years old or higher! Seven to eight hundred year-old medicine ingredients are not enough!” When the youth saw Han Li set up the barrier, he spouted this out impatiently. It seemed he was very worried!

Han Li looked at him indifferently and didn’t say anything. Instead, he directly took out the case that was holding the spiritual medicine from his storage pouch.

Although it wasn’t the thousand year-old Yellow Essence

Mushroom that had been sold, it was an equivalently aged thousand year-old Violet Osmanthus Flowers. Since he didn't specify a particular medicine ingredient, it seemed that so long as the medicinal herb was at least a thousand years old, it should be fine. According to Han Li's estimates, the youth most likely wanted a thousand year-old medicinal herb to extend someone's life. As a result, he wasn't particularly fussy.

"This is..." The youth fixedly stared at the case, his face full of expectation.

"Your perception is not wrong. It truly is a thousand year old medicinal herb. However, before I open it, shouldn't we have a chat about what item Your Highness will be using to exchange for this medicinal herb!?" Han Li asked coldly. Since the other party demanded it from him, it was only natural he would have them bleed for a moment! These rarely seen formation establishing magic tools, Han Li wanted to have a few more on hand as it was always good to have spares.

"What does Senior wish for? Apart from the magic tools Junior has on hand, there is nothing else worth trading!" After the youth heard Han Li's words, he was startled for a moment before saying these words with slight embarrassment.

"Do you feel that a badly damaged formation establishment magic tool can be exchanged for this thousand year-old spiritual medicine?" When Han Li heard his words, he did not reveal any expression of disappointment and instead replied with an indifferent voice.

“This...”

The short, coarse youth scratched his head in puzzlement. He strongly felt such an exchange wasn't suitable.

Chapter 227: Making Friends

“Is Senior interested in the art of tool-refining?” The short, stocky youth hesitated for a long time before suddenly forcing out such a sentence, causing Han Li to feel greatly stunned.

“What do you mean?” Han Li felt some uncertainty.

“Could it be that you want to pass down a tool-refining technique!” Han Li asked without thinking.

“Senior guessed it! The only thing I can take out is the tool-refining technique that I have on me!” the youth exclaimed somewhat dejectedly.

When Han Li heard this, he was speechless! He had only wanted to obtain a few formation flag and plate items; who wanted to learn how to refine tools? Even more so, who did this youth think he was! His tool-refining technique was so rare? The cultivators who knew about refining tools were not few in number!

“However, because of ancestral rules, Junior can only give you the experience that I have accumulated; I cannot teach you this technique personally!” the youth immediately stammered , complementing his previous sentence.

Han Li blinked his eyes, and was at even more of a loss for words!

Seeing that Han Li, upon hearing his suggestion, continued to be

silent as if he were unwilling, the youth couldn't help but begin to feel anxious. He no longer care about concealing his identity, and he hurriedly blurted out truthfully:

“My grandfather used to be a tool-refining elder from the Divine Weapons Sect; his technique in tool-refining had long since reached great heights! My own tool-refining technique was taught to me hand in hand by my grandfather. For Junior to hand over his tool-refining heart to you today is already breaking the ancestral rules! As for how much Senior can gain depends completely on Senior's good fortune! However, I can guarantee that they are all secrets that have never been spread to outsiders from the cultivation world!”

Han Li's expression finally changed upon hearing that this youth was a descendant of a Divine Weapons Sect tool-refining elder!

Didn't this Divine Weapons Sect stand side-by-side with the Heavenly Star Sect and the Thousand Wonders Monastery as one of the three great sects in the State of Yuan Wu! The tool-refining techniques there, as well as the formations of the Heavenly Star Sect and the Thousand Wonders Monastery's Dao of Talismans, were all incredibly well-known by many cultivators in the neighboring states.

In this way, it seemed that the other person's tool refinement insight was truly not average! Although Han Li would most likely not end up learning it, even having it in his possessions could be a bargaining chip. Who knew if in the future he would have some use for it?

Han Li made a decision in his heart; however, he still asked:

“Can your Five Elements Reversal Formation establishment magic tools really be further improved?”

“It definitely can be! My friend has long reached perfection in the Dao of Formations; adding on my tool-refining technique, improving this formation establishment magic tool will not pose a big problem!” Seeing that Han Li asked that question, the youth knew that he had most likely agreed. Thus, he immediately became joyful and assured Han Li, patting his chest.

Han Li nodded his head and did not continue speaking. However, he took the lid off the box in his hand, and immediately a medicinal fragrance filled with Spiritual Qi filled the soundproof barrier. The youth lightly sniffed it a few times, then used his eyes to closely examine it several more times. The delight in his eyes greatly increased, and he nodded his head repeatedly to express his satisfaction.

Seeing this, Han Li gently smiled; he reached out his hand and handed it over.

The youth hurriedly and happily stretched out his hand to receive it. However, when he grabbed a corner of the box, wanting to take it away, it seemed that this box containing the spiritual medicine had grown roots on Han Li's hand and did not budge at all! This caused the youth to stare blankly, and a surprised expression was revealed on his face.

Han Li, seeing the other person raise his head and look at him at a loss, couldn't help but sigh.

It seemed like this individual truly was an influential family's young master who had not experienced many trials and hardships! He still did not recognize such an obvious hint from Han Li?

Helplessly, Han Li could only use his mouth to clarify for the other person:

“Shouldn't you also take out that set of magic tool and your tool-refining insights? That way, we can exchange the goods at the same time! Isn't doing it this way somewhat more appropriate?”

“Oh....., Senior spoke correctly; Junior forgot this matter in my excitement!” The short, stocky youth finally was enlightened, and he let go of the box, his face blood red. He clumsily pulled out a stack of items from his storage pouch.

“Here are eighteen formation plates and thirty-six formation flags; these are the complete set of the Five Elements Reversal Formation establishment magic tools. As long as you follow the instructions on this piece of jade and set them up exactly as described, the formation will immediately take effect. Also, this Yunxiao technique insight manual was compiled from twenty years of my tool-refining experience; I hope that Senior can avoid spreading it around in the future to prevent the Divine Weapons Sect from coming to your door. This is because many of the tool-refining techniques in here are all secrets of the Divine Weapons Sect!” the youth explained in great detail. In addition, he also gave Han Li a significant piece of advice.

When Han Li heard these words, his impression of this youth became even more favorable! Another idea suddenly emerged in his heart!

After hesitating for a moment, Han Li stuffed the box in his hand into the bosom of the other person, then received the stack of item from the other person's hand.

Han Li's sudden movements, which were contrary to his usual behavior, actually caused the short, stocky youth to feel at a loss, as if he didn't know what he had done wrong.

"Yunxiao technique insight! Yunxiao is your name, right? What is your surname?" Han Li changed the indifferent expression he had used earlier; he received the items and gave them a few cursory glances before amiably asking the youth.

"Junior's surname is Ji, Ji Yunxiao! Does Senior have any more instructions?" The youth hesitated for a moment, but he still ended up speaking. However, he did not know what Han Li's intentions were.

"Nothing really. I just wanted to tell you that although I have received your collection of insights, I will use a sealing technique to seal it and will not touch it for five years. If in these five years, you can truly successfully improve this spell formation set for me, I will return the manual to you without having looked at a single page. What do you think?"

“Really? Then Junior can’t thank you enough! Senior can rest assured concerning this matter of improving the Five Elements Reversal Formation establishment magic tools! Even if Junior’s friend does not successfully improve it, I will still try to persuade him to make a truly great formation for Senior!” After hearing Han Li say this, the youth was overjoyed and hurriedly assured him.

Han Li gently smiled and picked up the 《Yunxiao Experience》 manual, holding it in his hands.

Following Han Li’s muttered incantations, a row of silver runes suddenly appeared on his hands; after circling in his palms for awhile, they entered the book and vanished! At the same time, a silver light flashed across the “Yunxiao experience” manual, and a faint silver light dissipated from it. This caused the entire book to suddenly become a chunk of silver, with no way of opening it even a tiny bit!

“Okay, I’ve finished sealing it! Now, circulate your Spiritual Qi through the seal. In this way, when we make the exchange in the future, you will know whether or not I’ve broken the seal!” Han Li sealed the book, then threw it over. The youth caught the book with surprise and happiness.

The youth stared at it slack-jawed for a moment, but with a stomp of his foot, he left some Spiritual Qi on the seal. Then, with an expression both of doubt and gratitude, he returned the book to Han Li.

At this time, Han Li had pretty much figured out the other person’s state of mind. He knew that immediately gaining the

other person's trust was an impossible task! But when he returned the sealed book to the other person after a number of years, he would presumably be able to secure the friendship of both the youth and that magic formation master, building up a relationship with them.

Of course, determining whether or not the other person was really worth building a relationship with still required them to interact for a long period of time before it would become clear!

Thus, Han Li stowed the book away. After asking for a method to communicate with the youth, he floated away without another superfluous sentence and left the area.

The youth was left in the same location with an expression of disbelief. He had obtained this thousand year-old spiritual medicine just like that? He fiercely squeezed the hard medicine box, and an expression of both confusion and excitement was revealed in his eyes.

Han Li naturally was in a very good mood, and he headed towards the tool-refining store.

Ji Yunxiao's tool-refining technique and his backer's identity as a magic formation master were much more valuable than a lifeless book! If he could build up relations with them, perhaps in the future it would be very helpful for his cultivation path! Han Li had no doubts about this!

Han Li finally returned to the store that had received his

contract. There, the white-haired elder was waiting anxiously for his arrival.

When he saw that Han Li really had kept his promise and returned, the store owner immediately beamed with joy and had the dark-skinned man quickly bring tea and rare fruits. He personally accompanied Han Li to sit down at the table and incessantly addressed him as Senior. Although Han Li was a thick-skinned person, his face still faintly blushed.

Next, Han Li took out the centipede's back shell out in front of the elder. This caused the elder's expression to change, and he immediately picked up a small piece, carefully caressing it and identifying it.

"This is the shell of an advanced grade one poisonous insect demonic beast; it truly is a very good tool-refining ingredient! Especially since the demonic beasts in the outside world are decreasing in number, encountering a poisonous insect demonic beast is an especially rare circumstance," the elder said with a smile. The wrinkles on his face seemed to have smoothed out.

The materials the other person possessed were all within his expectations. They weren't junk metal or any kind of miscellaneous garbage; instead, they were actually the outer shell of a poisonous insect demonic beast! They were extremely good materials, highly suited for crafting armor or shield-like magic tools.

According to his estimation, prior to being refined, these bug shells could forcefully receive an attack from a top-grade magic

tool without any serious damage! If it were successfully refined, it naturally could effortlessly reach the ranks of a top-grade magic tool.

The white-haired elder became happier the more he looked at it, and he happily picked up these pieces of shell, about to begin. However, he was stopped by Han Li!

“Store owner, don’t be hasty! There are still some ingredients that I haven’t brought out yet!” Seeing the elder’s frazzled behavior, Han Li couldn’t help but knit his eyebrows together and wonder if he had found himself the wrong tool-refining master!

Chapter 228: Puppet Cultivator

“There’s more?” The elder first stared blankly, but then he immediately became even happier; he laughed giddily for quite some time.

Although he didn’t know what sort of materials Han Li would pull out next, saving the best for last was a principle of common sense. His gaze towards Han Li was filled with even more expectation!

Although Han Li was somewhat doubtful of this store owner’s tool-refining methods, he would be unable to find another tool-refining master that he trusted more for some time; thus, he could only somewhat hesitatingly place the Inky Flood Dragon’s raw materials onto the table.

However, he had already decided in his heart that if this elder was unable to identify the origins of these materials, it would prove that the other person’s experience and methods would be problematic! If that time came, he would at most allow the elder to refine the hard shell in front of him.

As for the high-quality materials from the Inky Flood Dragon, he would have to wait to find a superior tool-refining master!

Since Han Li had made this plan, he naturally followed the elder’s expression and movements even more closely.

In the end, when he saw the pile of materials that Han Li had

taken out, the elder spat out his mouthful of clear tea onto the ground in front of him with a “puchi”.

“This is a flood dragon’s hide.....even its horns, fangs.....these are its eyes! Heavens, could Senior have single-handedly killed an evil flood dragon?” The white-haired store owner was shocked out of his normal behavior; he gazed at the materials in front of him with disbelief, incessantly muttering to himself.

No wonder this elder was so shocked! Demonic beasts like the flood dragon had already disappeared from nearby cultivation worlds for a long time. Even if there were some in hiding, this kind of evil flood dragon, which had seemingly evolved into a grade two demonic beast, was comparable to a cultivator beyond the Foundation Establishment stage.

Apart from Core Formation cultivators, how could average Foundation Establishment cultivators possibly be its opponent!? Even if that many cultivators in Foundation Establishment took action together, the pile of flood dragon materials in front of him was too complete! It was practically as if Han Li had dismembered an entire flood dragon and directly carried it over.

Could he have taken ownership of the complete corpse for himself, leaving nothing for the other cultivators? Or did this person have some terrifying method that allowed him to take care of this flood dragon on his own?

The elder’s imagination began to run wild as he fumbled around with these materials.

It was only now that a reverent attitude appeared in his heart towards Han Li!

The fact that the store owner had been able to immediately recognize these materials was somewhat beyond Han Li's expectations.

He originally believed that even if the other person was able to recognize these items, it would perhaps still require a lot of time and energy for him to do so. But since the elder had so easily identified the materials, Han Li gained some more faith in him.

“Store Owner Xu recognized them so quickly. This actually has assured me a lot. Then, Elder Xu, please begin refining!” Han Li politely said after thinking things over in his heart.

“Okay! Okay! Senior please have faith; when I, Xu, was still an apprentice, I refined a flood dragon corpse once before with my father. My grasp of it will definitely not be small!” the elder replied, nodding his head repeatedly. He held one of the Inky Flood Dragon's talons in his hand, unwilling to put it down!

Seeing this scene, Han Li felt that it was somewhat comical.

However, he also understood that this elder most likely was a person who was obsessed with refining tools. Otherwise, even if the materials were better, he would not have lost his self-control like this. In this way, however, Han Li felt even more at peace, since this meant that this person's mastery of tool-refining should

be pretty exceptional.

Thus, the elder led Han Li to the rear courtyard, bringing the materials with him!

.....

After half a month, Han Li finally walked out of the store's front door. He slowly left with a light smile on his face after turning around and gazing at the store.

When he was outside of the market's prohibited flying zone, Han Li lifted his hand, and a small, exquisite white boat shot out from his sleeve. It floated in front of him a few feet off the ground and began to gently shake.

Han Li gazed at it lovingly for a moment before flicking his finger; an azure streak of magic power hit the boat. Instantly, the small boat slowly expanded in size. After a brief moment, it had become a small canoe that could fit several people.

Han Li's figure gently shook when he saw this scene, and he got on the boat. Then, in a flash of white light, Han Li disappeared along with the boat, appearing thirty feet or so in the air!

“This Divine Wind Boat that was refined using the Inky Flood Dragon's fins and tail is really an incredibly flying magic tool. Although it is far from being able to contain as many people as the Masked Moon Sect's Heavenly Divine Moon Boat and has no

defensive abilities, based on speed alone it should be a very rarely seen flying magic tool. In this way, I will never have to use the leaf-shaped magic tool that travels as slowly as a turtle!” Han Li said to himself as he stood on the bow of the ship; a trace of happiness was revealed on his face.

Han Li suddenly sent his spiritual power into the small boat’s frame. In an explosion of bright white light, the Divine Wind Boat immediately became a streak of white and shot forwards. Its speed was extremely fast, more than enough to cause regular cultivators to stare, tongue-tied!

Han Li sat at the front of the ship, gently closing his eyes and reveling in the sensation of speed that he had never before experienced.

He reckoned that even if he were to fly at half the speed of the Divine Wind Boat, he could return to his cave in little more than an hour. Then, he would prepare to set up the weakened Five Elements Reversal Formation. Once he finished, he could cultivate in peace!

Just as Han Li was thinking this, he suddenly felt a strong burst of Spiritual Qi flying speedily towards his Divine Wind Boat from a location below him! Although he didn’t know what was attacking him, based on the immense Spiritual Qi that he felt, if it were to hit the small boat, the outcome would be the destruction of the boat and his death!

Han Li was both surprised and furious, and he abruptly opened his eyes wide! Then, the small boat below him suddenly doubled in

speed, whizzing numerous tens of feet away.

At the same time, a huge column of yellow light passed through the location where Han Li was just in a moment ago, flying into the distance without scattering. This caused Han Li's expression to become gloomy!

“Could there be people who knew I would pass through this place and set up an ambush for me ahead of time?” Han Li could not help but think this in his surprise and fury. Then, he immediately pulled out two azure-red dual-colored spheres, gently touching them together.

A “peng” sounded out.

Instantly, a surge of dense, azure-red fog simultaneously shot out of the two spheres, rapidly enveloping Han Li. In addition, it continued to expand; in the blink of an eye, it had become a huge azure-red cloud roughly a hundred feet in size. Han Li's figure completely disappeared in the cloud of fog.

With the protection of this azure-red cloud, Han Li slightly lowered his guard, coldly gazing at the earth below!

When he saw clearly the circumstance below, Han Li's jaw dropped wide open, and he had no way of closing it for quite some time. This was because there was a gang war going on below him!

Four or five Foundation Establishment cultivators were at a

disadvantage, confronting nearly a hundred enemies that had completely surrounded them. In addition, their opponents were all expressionless and spiritless; they were actually all tiger and leopard mechanical puppet beasts. There were even a few humanoid mechanical puppets, very similar to the one in Han Li's storage pouch.

Although the seemingly slow movements of the puppets made them seem easy to deal with, when one puppet was defeated or destroyed by these cultivators' magic tools, a few more puppets would walk out of the nearby forest and reinforce them, causing the numbers of puppets surrounding them to be constant and unchanging.

In addition, these puppets' offensive abilities were very frightening!

When these mechanical beasts occasionally opened their mouths, a huge column of light as big as a bowl, identical to the one that had almost hit Han Li, would shoot from their mouths. However, their columns of light were multicolored, representing their various attributes.

It seemed as if Han Li had been accidentally shot at by them!

As for those humanoid puppets, they were even stronger! There were puppet bowmen that were the same as the puppet bowman in Han Li's possession. They directly shot out finger-wide multicolored light arrows from the long bow in their hands. Although their strength was not as great as the light columns shot by the mechanical beasts, they were superior because they formed

an endless onslaught.

If it weren't for the fact that these cultivators had combined their efforts to set up a huge barrier, perhaps they would have long since died under the indiscriminate barrage of light arrows and columns.

However, what gave them the greatest headache was still those spear and saber-wielding close-combat puppets. Not only were those puppets wearing heavy armor, the weapons in their hands all shone with light, indicating that they were all genuine low to mid-grade magic tools.

Although there were only ten of them or so, they attacked incessantly after thoroughly surrounding the barrier. Under the onslaught, the barrier began to crumble, and its brightness fluctuated! If it wasn't for the fact that there were two cultivators pressing their hands to the barrier and replenishing its magic power at all times, it would have most likely been broken through numerous times already.

It wasn't that the cultivators really couldn't do anything about these puppets!

They were, after all, Foundation Establishment cultivators; not only was their magic power very deep, the magic tools they possessed were also frighteningly powerful. In this small amount of time, thirty or forty puppets had already been demolished by their attacks.

However, no matter how strong the magic tools in their hands were, the number of puppets in the forest seemed to be inexhaustible. They continuously supplemented the existing number without stopping, and so the battle became one of attrition. The more these cultivators fought, the colder their hearts grew!

Han Li, hiding in midair within the azure cloud, was also stunned by what he saw! It seemed as if in this span of time, nobody had yet discovered his existence; that column of light had been nothing but an accident!

Finally, one cultivator ran out of patience. He suddenly added on numerous layers of protective spells onto his body. Then, waving a banner-shaped defensive magic tool, he directly escaped out of the large barrier, flying towards the sky. It seemed as if he wanted to flee from this area!

Seeing this, the other few cultivators couldn't help but break the silence and begin to curse him out.

However, their curses had just left their mouths when a gigantic column of light tens of feet wide suddenly shot out from the forest. In a flash, it directly hit the cultivator in midair. He was immediately turned into a fireball, leaving him no time to even whimper before he fell to the ground. Whether he was alive or dead was a mystery.

Chapter 229: Huge Tiger

The curses of the few cultivators who were furious after their companion left them without saying anything had already disappeared. They gazed at each other, seeing a trace of dread in each others' eyes.

Just then, although they had been in an extremely disadvantageous position, they actually did not feel any worry in their hearts apart from a slight feeling of vexation. They all reckoned that even if they couldn't kill off all these mechanical puppets, escaping through the air was still something that could be easily accomplished!

But now, the escapee's fate immediately shocked them out of their wishful dreams! He had so many protective spells on his body, and he was even wielding a defensive magic tool, but even so, he was actually unable to withstand that column of light in the slightest. How could this not frighten them?!

In addition, the higher one's cultivation base, the more one feared death! They had, with great difficulty, achieved a point where they could live slightly longer than regular people. There was also the possibility that they could live even longer, so how could they be willing to die so easily!

However, that frighteningly thick column of light was simply too powerful!

If it hadn't been directed at the fleeing cultivator but rather at

their protective barrier...these people really didn't know if they could have received it.

The more these cultivators thought about it, the more they panicked! They couldn't help but begin to think about retreating.

But now, even if they wanted to retreat, the opponent would not easily let them go now that he had the advantage! This caused them to be caught in a dilemma.

Hiding in the clouds high above their heads, Han Li was also shocked by that domineering column of light to the point that his body emanated cold air! Now he was even more unwilling to rashly reveal himself.

However, he was also not very willing to just leave this place in this manner.

Thus, he could rely on the outstanding speed of the Divine Wind Boat to escape even after being discovered. Han Li continued to stay in midair, observing what transpired!

However, the azure-red cloud of smoke that Han Li's magic tool had transformed into was truly somewhat eye-catching if he left it floating in midair above the cultivators and puppets! Luckily, while Han Li had been in mid-flight, he had greatly increased the altitude of the small boat to a distance of about thousand feet.

Thus, Han Li had yet to be discovered by the surrounded

cultivators or the figure in the forest controlling the puppets.

However, Han Li also knew that this method could not be carried on indefinitely, but if he were to retrieve the cloud of smoke, he would definitely be exposed in midair.

Besides, the top-grade magic tool “Azure Fire Miasma” that had been refined from a pair of flood dragon eyes could conceal Han Li’s figure, causing enemies to be unable to determine his exact location. In addition, the remaining blood of the Inky Flood Dragon’s Dan had been incorporated in the dense, azure-red fog. This would cause the people who unwittingly came into contact with the cloud to feel dizzy and lightheaded, slowly being poisoned without even knowing!

With such an incredible defensive and stealthy magic tool at hand, how could Han Li not choose to use it?

In his desperation, Han Li suddenly saw a grey cloud floating in a nearby location above where he was hiding. He instantly rejoiced in his heart and slowly drew near to it. Finally, both him and the protective cloud around him entered the cloud.

Now, any traces of Han Li had been completely covered up!

Now that he didn’t have to worry about being discovered, he continued to watch the battle down on the ground with reassurance.

Evidently, that supreme beam of light earlier had dispelled the self-confidence of these Foundation Establishment cultivators. Thus, although they were still attacking with their various magic tools and the fight appeared to be very intense, Han Li could see that the strength of their attacks was far weaker than they were originally.

This was obviously because everyone had their own ulterior motives and appeared to be unwilling to resist the enemy together anymore.

Just as Han Li was quietly shaking his head, an elderly cultivator within the barrier seemingly also became aware that something was wrong. He suddenly yelled loudly towards the forest:

“Does Sir really want to continue the slaughter? We are all disciples from various sects of the State of Yuan Wu; if you kill us, you will have wronged the State of Yuan Wu’s entire cultivation world. Are you not afraid of incurring a fatal disaster?”

“Hehe! Fatal disaster?”

“If you had said so before I killed that cultivator who had wanted to fly away, perhaps I would have considered it. However, now that someone has already died, offending once is still an offense. It would be better to kill everybody off. Perhaps this way, no one will know of this matter!”

“We don’t have any malicious intentions! As long as you are willing to make peace, we will swear an oath that we definitely will

keep this matter a secret!” a significantly younger cultivator hurriedly vowed.

“Hmph! Swearing an oath? I don’t believe in such trifles! You guys were stealthily following behind me for such a long time, yet you still say that you don’t have any malicious intentions? Could it be that you want to invite me to a meal? Besides, I am not a person from the State of Yuan Wu. Even if I did offend the cultivation world of your state, what can you do? Do you want to follow me back to the Thousand Bamboo School to demand justice? If that’s really the case, I, Mo, very much admire your sect’s elders’ boldness!”

An extremely harsh voice came from within the forest. Upon hearing this voice, Han Li thought that it sounded very familiar!

“It’s him?” Han Li quietly thought, somewhat surprised.

Based on the sound of his voice, it was definitely the burly man who had bought the mechanical puppet beasts at the auction! Hearing their exchange, it was obvious that these cultivators had secretly followed this person right after the auction had ended. They probably wanted to use some dishonorable methods to discover the puppet beasts’ secrets! Who knew that this Thousand Bamboo School fellow became aware of their actions a long time ago and actually laid a trap for them, instantly trapping them here?

“Everybody, we have no choice but to go all out against him. He has already made it clear that he wants to silence us!” The first cultivator to speak was not stupid; he immediately attempted to

arouse the fighting spirit of the other cultivators, intending to fight to the death!

“Do you even have the qualifications to go all out against me? Don’t talk about going all out if you can’t even win against my puppet beast army! I have toyed around enough with you people; it’s best if I hurry up and send you on your way!” The burly man’s tone was still just as harsh, but the killing intent in his words was undoubtedly revealed!

Just as his words left his mouth, a loud, earth-shaking sound suddenly emerged from within the forest; then, booming, heavy footsteps came charging out of the forest, causing the cultivators inside the barrier and Han Li, who was in midair, to glance around wildly, not knowing exactly what had occurred!

Although the footsteps were very heavy, they were very quick; in the blink of an eye, they had arrived in an area nearby the forest. Now, all of the people could see what was happening clearly! A roughly fifty-or sixty-foot-tall puppet tiger leapt out of the forest. The burly cultivator, still wearing a cloak, was naturally sitting on the head of the giant tiger.

Upon seeing that the puppet tiger was so enormous, the few cultivators were all secretly shocked and couldn’t help but think of the huge column of light that they had seen earlier. It was likely that it had been shot by this beast!

After it appeared, the burly man did not say anything superfluous and directly patted the tiger’s head.

Instantly, the puppet tiger beneath him slowly opened its lower jaw; faint white light began to condense in its huge mouth! The other puppets that were attacking the barrier instantly stopped one by one, retreating a few steps in an orderly fashion!

These cultivators obviously knew that the situation did not look good, so all of them reached out their hands and pressed them against the barrier; this was the only barrier that could save their lives! As for escaping the barrier and flying away, everybody had once harbored this idea but learned from the unfortunate cultivator's mistake. Nobody dared to lightly make such a move!

The huge column of white light appeared once again! This time, the domineering light column was actually forcefully blocked by the cooperative efforts of the few cultivators with the help of the barrier, temporarily creating a stalemate!

Although Han Li was very high up in the sky, by virtue of his extraordinary eyesight, he could still clearly see that these cultivators did not appear happy even though they had successfully blocked the column of light. Instead, their faces became pale after pouring such large quantities of their spiritual energy into this barrier!

However, Han Li believed that this destructive attack could not continue for long and would be over before long! The few cultivators inside the barrier also seemed to understand this principle, so they each continued to grit their teeth and bitterly hold on!

As expected, the column of light was maintained for a brief moment before gradually thinning, then disappearing from the tiger's mouth!

Having received a new lease on life, the cultivators revealed joyful expressions as they finally retrieved the hands that they had placed on the barrier, letting out a big sigh.

However, the burly man coldly laughed upon seeing this. He suddenly uncovered a secret panel on the tiger's head, then flipped his hand and tossed a mid-grade fire attribute spirit stone into opening. Then, the originally extinguished white light in the tiger's mouth began to shine again, causing the other cultivators to become completely dazed when they saw this scene!

Han Li gnawed on his lips even more, speechless at the extravagant expense. One mid-grade spirit stone for an all-out attack! How was this a battle tactic? It was clearly using piles of spirit stones to forcefully bash these cultivators. It seemed like the Thousand Bamboo School in his faraway country was extremely rich and had huge stores of spirit stones!

Just as Han Li's imagination was running wild, the cultivators who were originally able to work together finally scattered under the extremely large threat facing them.

This was because the magic power they had remaining was not very much; continuing to forcefully resist would only bring them an earlier death! Thus, it would be better for them to each rely on their own luck and escape individually!

As expected, the burly man willed the huge tiger to attack two of the cultivators one after the other with the huge column of light. Their fates were almost the same as the first individual; their bodies were charred black, and their remains were truly too horrible to look at.

Chapter 230: Trap

Two cultivators flew off into the distance to escape. In the blink of an eye, they disappeared into the sky. The burly man sat astride the tiger and coldly looked at them as they departed. It seemed he didn't want to pursue them at all!

Hiding in the clouds, Han Li felt a bit bewildered. A moment ago, it seemed this person was vicious and merciless. There was no way he would let them off so easily, unless.....could he have something up his sleeve?

As Han Li was casually making a few guesses, he suddenly heard the ice cold voice of the burly man. "Your esteemed self, you've been watching this scene for quite a long time. Are you waiting for an opportunity to dispose of this elderly man?"

When Han Li heard this, he was greatly startled.

"Could it be that although I was hiding at such a high altitude, he was still able to see me?"

With this thought, Han Li couldn't help but gulp. He felt his heart beating in his throat.

After witnessing the ferocity of these mechanical puppets, Han Li did not wish to suffer the same fate as the other cultivators and become a target of the huge tiger's attacks.

The speed of that transcendent light beam was far too fast, and its might was frightening! According to Han Li's estimates, if he were to directly face it, apart from fleeing with the utmost speed on his Divine Wind Boat, he would truly have no other method to safely escape the light beam attack.

After slight consideration, Han Li couldn't help but want to escape far away through the sky and avoid provoking fatal disaster! But after he took a look at the burly man's actions, all thoughts of this immediately disappeared.

That was because the direction the puppets pointed their weapons was not toward him in the sky. Instead, they were pointed toward a small mound of earth not far away.

Han Li was so startled he nearly bit his own tongue!

There was actually a third person here, yet Han Li hadn't noticed him in the slightest.

Crash. The sound of earth shifting drifted over from the small earth mound. A single eccentric wearing a gray hood on his head emerged, standing opposite of the burly man.

"So it really was you!"

"Who in the world are you? It seems as if you know a bit about the secrets of this mechanical puppet!"

The burly man looked at him with a bone-chilling glare, viciously staring at this eccentric.

“Huang Long, I haven’t seen you for so many years. It seems your fiery temperament hasn’t changed!” After a moment of silence from the hooded eccentric, he said a few words that caused the burly man and Han Li to feel great amazement.

“How do you know who I am! Are you an acquaintance of this one named Huang!”

Having heard the other party speak out his name, the burly man could not help but reveal an expression of shock. However, since his identity was already exposed, his disguise was worthless. He then bluntly tore off his cloak and threw it to the floor.

A fierce-looking man with a short sallow hair was revealed.

“You’ve properly abandoned being your Thousand Bamboo School’s Great Protector; now you are five thousand kilometers away doing what? Could it be because you wanted to conceal the half-complete Great Development Technique in your puppet beast?” The eccentric ignored the burly man’s actions and asked this leisurely.

“You’re still not revealing your identity? Don’t blame me for being impolite!” Having heard the other party attack his greatest secrets, Huang Long’s expression changed as he hastily berated back with a stern voice.

“Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten? I, the one who originally taught you the first layer chant of the Great Development Technique in secret?

After a moment of hesitation, the eccentric eventually divulged this, causing the other party’s face to greatly change. Huan Long stepped back several times.

“You’re Senior Martial Brother Lin?... Impossible. Senior Martial Brother Lin passed away many years ago. You dare to play with me!? I will take your life!” After a moment of shock, he immediately yelled back furiously. Then with a vicious appearance, he waved his hand. The hundreds of puppets immediately stepped forward to surround the eccentric from afar.

“It seems that Junior Martial Brother Huang still hasn’t forgotten his feelings from old times. This makes Brother very happy!” The eccentric’s eyes suddenly grew soft, and he tore off the hood on his head, revealing his true identity.

“Senior Martial Brother Lin!”

“Martial Uncle Lin!”

The large man and Han Li, who had been paying attention this entire time, nearly shouted at the same time. However, while the large man actually shouted out loud, Han Li mere cried out in his mind.

This eccentric was the old man named Lin who liked carving. Han Li had seen him in that stone room the day he entered Yellow Maple Valley. Because the small monkey he was carving at the time was extremely adorable and lifelike, the old man had left a deep impression on Han Li, so Han Li was thus able to recognize his present appearance.

“It truly is Senior Brother Lin. Why does Senior Brother have such an aged appearance? Furthermore, you haven’t already...” Although the large man yelled this, he still went through a moment of disbelief before grabbing the Senior Martial Brother Lin in front of him with both hands, wearing an expression of great emotion.

“Hehe! Junior Martial Brother Huang, this brother only faked his death that day. That death was only... What are you doing!”

Han Li’s Martial Uncle Lin was saying this with a smile, but his expression immediately changed. He suddenly shook off the hands of this Junior Martial Brother Huang with fright. Two deep wounds as thin as chopsticks appeared on his wrists. Black blood freely bled from the wounds; there was clearly poison within them.

“It seems Senior Martial Brother Lin’s mind has spoiled during these many years of hiding. How could you be this careless and let your Junior Martial Brother injure your wrists? Tsk tsk! That was Black Thread Venom that I acquired from the Venomous Poison Sect with quite some difficulty. I’m afraid that it is quite hard to get rid of! This is Senior Martial Brother’s fault. Since you’re feigned your death, how could you want to form a relation with

your previous subordinate and futilely try to steal the second half of the Great Development Technique? The current School Master Jin is very unhappy, so he sent this Junior Martial Brother to come and clear the weeds!” Huang Long coldly chuckled several times before mocking him.

“Good! Good! Truly my good Junior Martial Brother is passionate toward me!”

After a short moment of fury, Senior Martial Brother Lin quickly regained his calm. He hastily moved his hands as fast as the wind, forcing some of the poisonous blood out. He then took out a green jade bottle and poured all of the yellow medicine powder it contained down his throat. Rigidly staring at the large, yellow-haired man, he said with an ice-cold expression, “It seems the information that my good subordinate gave me was all false! The second half of the Great Development Technique simply does not reside within the puppet beast. This was all a trap to lure me in! But what baffles me is how the secret shop managed to cooperate with you in this manner.”

“Money moves people’s hearts. This proverb from the mortal world applies to the cultivation world all the same! So long as the school pays enough, nothing is impossible!” Huang Long said with a slanted mouth.

Then he turned his head, and yelled off to the forest at the side, “Come out! Everyone come and see the handsome and confident School Master Lin’s only son, the great Martial Brother Lin!”

“Hehe! Little Sister has heard of Senior Martial Brother Lin’s

reputation for a long time. It is a pity that she had entered the sect late and didn't get the chance to see your face!"

"Humph! What Senior Martial Brother Lin? I only see the corpse of an old dog!"

The voice of a dainty woman and the coarse voice of a jealous man came from the woods. A man and a woman then walked out side by side.

"Let me introduce Senior Martial Brother to these two. They are new Great Protectors of the school—"

Huang Long was currently thinking of willfully teasing him for a moment; this Senior Martial Brother Lin had pressured him from above during those past years. However, without even finishing his sentence, he already knew he had fallen into Senior Martial Brother Lin's trap. Senior Martial Brother Lin's figure suddenly whirled as he disorderly waved his hands without stopping. Black specks radiated in a large area, shooting out from his body in all directions.

Then, the countless radiant specks on the floor immediately flickered without end. One by one, small and fully-armed puppet soldiers emerged and grew in size. There were more than two hundred in the vicinity; it was an extremely marvelous sight.

"Be careful, this fellow has reached the third layer of the Great Development Technique and is able to control these many puppets! We must all tangle him down by any means or else he will escape.

So long as the poison in his body flares up, even with his heavenly skill, he can only wait to be captured.” After Huang Long said this, he ordered his subordinates to attack.

After the man and woman glanced at each other, they also released two hundred puppets and began to attack.

Suddenly, a new wave of puppet attacks was launched. All kinds of light arrows and beams were shot out endlessly. At the same time, there were many armed puppet soldiers and puppet beasts tangled in combat! This scene caused Han Li, who was viewing this from above, to be dumbstruck.

Although he couldn't see clearly what had happened towards the end, he was able to vaguely make out about seventy to eighty percent.

That Senior Martial Brother Lin whom he had met before formally entering the sect actually originated from the Thousand Bamboo School. Furthermore, he was the child of a school master! But it was clear he had already lost his influence when he chose to conceal himself at Yellow Maple Valley until now! But because he sought to acquire this Great Development Technique, Martial Uncle Lin had become the subject of the new school master's wrath. Members of his former sect were sent to thoroughly exterminate him.

When Han Li clearly understood this relationship, he could not help but sigh.

Then he looked at the frenzy below. He knew that this wasn't something an initial stage Foundation Establishment cultivator could opportunistically stick his hand into, but rather something he should escape from as best as he could out of fear that he could get himself caught up in it.

Clearly understanding his own interests, Han Li immediately put away the Azure Fire Miasma, and moved his Divine Wind Boat with the greatest speed, immediately turning into a rainbow streak that cut through the sky.

Han Li's extremely large movements were naturally noticed by the four below, causing them to grow greatly frightened; they could not help but slow down their fighting.

None of them expected that someone had actually been eavesdropping on their conversation all along. It seemed that the person who had heard their secret wasn't weak, but after seeing Han Li tactfully flee into the distance without intending to help anyone, the four looked at each other and wordlessly agreed to continue their battle.

Chapter 231: Disaster Knocking At The Door

Flying as fast as he could, Han Li returned to his Immortal's cave after a short while.

Without doing anything further, he took out the formation establishment jade slip that Qi Yunxiao had given him and immersed his consciousness into it, carefully reading the method of using the formation establishment magic tools.

Han Li decided to push his previous plans to the side and first set up the great formation around his Immortal's cave. After all, those cultivators were fighting not too far away; he did not feel safe!

The setup of the Five Elements Reversal Formation was quite simple.

After the precisely inserting the formation flags and burying the formation plates, he was required to place down several small-scale magic formations with spirit stones outside of the formation center to provide the large formation with sufficient spiritual power.

Like that, the large formation was able to immediately function. Furthermore, the formation's master only needed to know a few simple control commands and use the master formation flag on hand to ceaselessly shift and control the formation patterns, trapping enemies within illusions.

Han Li inserted the formation flags and buried the formations

plates. Then he begrudgingly embedded several mid-grade spirit stones. These were half of all the spirit stones he possessed, and the loss caused his heart to ache for the majority of the day. But because he didn't want to reduce the power of this great formation, he could only resign himself to parting with his wealth.

Though if he were to exchange some spiritual medicines of a certain age at the market city, Han Li would be able to acquire a great amount of spirit stones, but the odds of others discovering his secret and putting him under torturous interrogation would increase threefold. If he were not cautious and careful, he could've been attacked from all sides like that scene he just witnessed!

After testing the large formation's operations, it seemed quite effective, but the specific defensive trapping ability could only be tested during an enemy trespass. But regarding its ability to completely shroud the vicinity of the Immortal's cave for several acres without the slightest of abnormalities, Han Li found it to be greatly worth it.

Han Li, now feeling completely safe, returned to his chambers and started to think about his cultivation.

If he wanted even the slightest chance of entering the cycle of Core Formation, he would have to possess a top-grade cultivation technique, talent that one in ten thousand didn't even possess, as well as the greatest of fortunes.

The problem of Foundation Establishment fundamentally didn't compare! After all, Foundation Establishment only required sufficient aptitude and one or two Foundation Establishment Pills;

with this, the odds of entering Foundation Establishment were rather large.

As for Core Formation, even with all of the above-mentioned circumstances, cultivators truly capable of entering Core Formation were few in number. Thus, every time a core formation cultivator appeared, almost every clan and sect would convene to celebrate without reserve. Furthermore, news of this would spread quickly throughout the cultivation world.

The reason why the Masked Moon sect had become the number one cultivation sect in the State of Yue, apart from having over a thousand Foundation Establishment disciples, a number that far exceeded that of other sects, was because they had more than ten Core Formation Experts; this allowed them to look down upon the other six sects with disdain!

Han Li knew that his own aptitudes were disastrous, far below that of other Formation Establishment disciples. The only cultivation technique he possessed was a very dubious “Azure Essence Sword Art”, a cultivation technique he couldn’t use under any circumstance! His current chances were as thin as a veil. He could only hope that his luck would fare better.

As such, Han Li currently seemed to be at a complete disadvantage in all areas!

But after a moment of pondering, Han Li felt that although his aptitude was rather poor, with the mysterious small bottle he possessed that could mature spirit medicines along with his skill at pill-refinement, this was not an obstacle that could not be

overcome. Also, destiny couldn't be grasped with a person's power, so he did not need to mull over it. All he could do was strive to increase his own chances of reaching Core Formation and find a suitable top-grade cultivation technique for his own use.

With his goal set on finding a cultivation technique, Han Li first thought of his cheap master, Li Huayuan.

Although he had merely taken in Han Li as an in-name disciple, he should be willing to impart a few cultivation techniques to him. After all, he was a Core Formation Expert; perhaps Han Li could pick out a cultivation technique and even receive a pointer or two!

With this thought, Han Li decided to return to Yellow Maple Valley the next morning and ask about the whereabouts of his master's Immortal's cave to seek some instruction. It was highly likely that his master had yet to hear the news of his success in achieving Foundation Establishment.

As he thought this, he found it truly funny! Ever since Li Huayuan took him in, Han Li hadn't been called upon even a single time. It was as if this in-name disciple didn't exist at all, causing Han Li to feel upset!

Naturally, as vexed as he was, Han Li couldn't take the initiative to call on him and make his master feel like the way he ignored Han Li wasn't discreet!

But now that Han Li had reached Foundation Establishment, he could truly go to find this master of his! Even so, although he was

his master's disciple, he would actually have to go and ask a few baffled strangers, much to his extreme embarrassment!

Han Li laughed at himself for a moment before slowly falling asleep on his stone bed with a bitter smile.

After sleeping for an unknown amount of time, a sudden and intense quake forcefully roused Han Li from sleep. As he was still half asleep and did not fully understand the situation, he almost believed the quake was a dream of his.

But another violent quake came, causing Han Li's last trace of sleepiness to disappear without a trace. Apart from the earth shaking, an explosive rupture came from outside his Immortal's cave. It was clear that someone had touched his own restriction spell and was forcefully attacking his great restriction formation.

Han Li was startled and furious! He immediately ran out of his bedroom and charged straight out of his Immortal's cave.

Outside the Immortal's cave was a dense barrage of light arrows and beams attacks coming from several mechanical puppets floating in the sky. When Han Li saw this, he was so shocked that he nearly bit his own tongue.

What was going on? Because he was afraid of attracting trouble, he didn't interfere with yesterday's matter. But after he returned to his home, they were actually able to find him. Furthermore, from their overbearing manner, it seemed they had some sort of misunderstanding. Could it be that when he flew away yesterday,

they were able to track him?

During this time of desperation, Han Li's mind was actually clear and his mind produced several scheming responses one after another.

“The people inside had better listen well! Hand over the one who has escaped into your cave. So long as you hand over that person to us, we will not disturb this dwelling's master any further. There is no reason for your esteemed self to offend our Thousand Bamboo School and invite calamity by defending strangers!”

Even under these people's fierce, unrestrained assault, their attempt to dissolve the Five Elements Reversal Formation produced no visible effects. A man's persuasive voice came down from the sky, belonging to that person Huang Long.

When Han Li heard this, he could not help but look up.

In the patch of sky with the most puppets, a green jade raft was suspended in the air. There were six or seven differently clothed individuals with Huang Long at the very front. Behind him were the man and woman Han Li had seen before, as well as four other slim men who looked completely similar. They were rarely seen quadruplets! It seemed they were reinforcements from the Thousand Bamboo School in a rush.

When Han Li heard they wanted him to hand someone over, he was startled. With complete doubt, he looked toward the center of his Five Elements Reversal Formation and saw a still person lying

facedown near the entrance of his cave; it was unknown whether he was dead or alive!

When Han Li saw this figure, the doubt in his stomach disappeared. He inwardly cursed without end!

It seemed this Senior Martial Brother Lin ran over here to escape and somehow entered Han Li's cave by mistake. As Han Li had attracted so much trouble toward him, how should he respond? But seeing how the great might of this damaged formation actually resisted such a berserk attack, Han Li felt much safer and wasn't as panicked as he was originally.

Thus, after he wrinkled his brow, Han Li held the formation flag in hand and entered the formation spell, walking toward Senior Martial Brother Lin.

Han Li used both his hands to forcefully turn Senior Martial Brother Lin onto his back. After carefully looking at his face, Han Li's expression immediately became unsightly, unable to say a single word.

That was because he had no words to say to a dead man! With a jet-black face and trails of blood from his seven orifices, this Senior Martial Brother Lin had long since stopped breathing!

Han Li let out a sigh. After a moment of hesitation, he reached out into the body's bosom. Han Li wanted to find the puppets in Senior Brother Lin's storage pouch as he was greatly interested in these types of unfair methods of combat.

But just as Han Li's hand opened the corpse's jacket, a faint green ball of light seized the opportunity to suddenly fly out and throw itself toward Han Li's face like a shooting star. Han Li shouted "Aiya!" with fright, and his body fell backward!

Just as the ball of light was heading toward Han Li's face, Han Li's right hand suddenly flashed with white light and shot forth like lightning, tightly grabbing hold of the green ball of light. The light ball that he grabbed seemed to moan in pain.

"Junior Martial Brother, please spare my life! Junior Martial Brother, I was completely wronged by the Qiu Clan and was forced without any other option! So long as Junior Martial Brother is willing to release me, I guarantee that Junior Martial Brother will receive enormous profit!" Senior Martial Brother Lin's repentant voice entered Han Li's mind and promised great reward.

"Did you try to possess my body just now?" Han Li ignored the enticement with a dark face.

"This..., it was just as Junior Martial Brother described it! However, I was confused during that time; I will certainly compensate Junior Martial Brother for the fright! I wish that Sir Junior Martial Brother will be gracious and will not stoop down to Senior Martial Brother's level," Han Li heard Senior Martial Brother Li's embarrassed response along with repeated apologies.

Chapter 232: Great Development Technique

When Han Li heard the other person's words, he didn't actually open his mouth to say anything. Instead, he lowered his head and began to think while he tightly grasped the other person's soul with a single hand that glowed with white light!

After a long while, Han Li lifted his head up and said coldly:

“If your soul's invasion had taken me by surprise, would you have had mercy on me? Your magic power is much deeper than mine even though we're both at Foundation Establishment. More likely than not, I would have been gobbled up by you.”

Han Li's words were overflowing with ill intent!

“I can tell you a secret and give you an exceptional cultivation technique!” Senior Martial Brother Li was greatly frightened and began to send transmissions through his soul.

“Secret cultivation technique? Could this be the Great Development Technique of your Thousand Bamboo School?”

Han Li's indifferent sentence immediately caused the soul's green light to flash; in addition, it began to transmit with shock, stuttering:

“How do you know of this matter? You..... you're the person who was snooping yesterday!”

At this time, Senior Martial Brother Lin finally realized what had happened.

“Okay, since you know that I am not clueless about your situation, you should obediently tell me everything! You wouldn’t want me to immediately destroy your soul!” Although Han Li spoke very casually, this caused Senior Martial Brother Lin’s soul to tremble in his hand.

“Didn’t Junior Martial Brother pretty much hear all that there was to say yesterday?” Senior Martial Brother Lin let out a long sigh and asked faintly.

Meanwhile, those people from the Thousand Bamboo School outside the formation, seeing that no response came after they transmitted their words through the large formation, couldn’t help but be shamed into anger; they released their puppet beasts, unleashing a new round of attacks. The large formation became lively once again, but the interior of the formation was still just as calm as before apart from some noise and aftershocks!

“Junior Martial Brother, what strange formation is this? It can actually withstand this fierce attack; it truly is unbelievable!” Senior Martial Brother Lin interjected upon seeing this scene; he purposefully acted surprised and spoke.

“Hmph, don’t worry about my formation, and don’t recklessly change the subject either. I have absolutely no interest in the internal strife of your Thousand Bamboo School. All I want to

know is whether you have a portion of the Great Development Technique and if you gain any remarkable abilities as you cultivate it. If you want to purposefully stall for time, I will immediately destroy you,” Han Li said, his tone suddenly becoming cold as he knitted his eyebrows.

Next, the white light on his hand abruptly flourished, and with a gentle force of his finger, he instantly caused Senior Martial Brother Lin’s soul to cry out repeatedly that he wouldn’t dare!

“This Great Development Technique is the original secret technique created by my sect’s founding ancestor. It is a secret technique specifically used to greatly increase one’s divine sense, as well as to split one’s soul. This is also a necessary cultivation technique for our Thousand Bamboo School to cultivate in order to use the puppets; only when one has cultivated this technique can one imprint one’s divine sense on all the numerous puppets and control them with ease! Otherwise, even if I were to refine more puppets, what use would they be to me if I couldn’t control them all at once?” Senior Martial Brother Lin said unhurriedly, not daring to procrastinate after tasting Han Li’s methods.

“Since it is a basic cultivation technique of the Thousand Bamboo School, why would you still need to scheme about it? You even mentioned something about another half. What was your fight all about?” Han Li continued to ask expressionlessly.

“There’s not much to hide. Although the Great Development Technique is a foundational cultivation technique of my Thousand Bamboo School, the fundamental teachings of our school cannot be easily spread to the public. Thus, the Great Development

Technique that the Thousand Bamboo School's disciples cultivate is only the abridged version of the first layer. Although it is easy to cultivate, even after completely cultivating it, it is still far from the strength of the first layer of the actual Great Development Technique. In addition, the real manual for the Great Development Technique can only be cultivated by the high-level cultivators in the sect."

"The people outside must have all cultivated the first two layers of the actual Great Development Technique to be able to control nearly a hundred mechanical puppets at once! Because I have cultivated the third layer of this technique, I am even better than them and can control three hundred at once. However, only the school master and his successors have the right to cultivate the Great Development Technique past the third layer!"

"During a rebellion within the Thousand Bamboo Sect, my father was plotted against by the current school master, Jin Nantian; even the entire Great Development Technique manual was forcefully taken away. I, as the young school master, was taking care of business outside of the school at the time. Because I had no way to resist the situation, I could only find a substitute to fake my death and left, hiding in the State of Yue, five thousand kilometers away. At that time, although I didn't have the entire Great Development Technique, because I was the only son of the school master, I still knew the cultivation technique for the first four layers. Thus, I compiled it all into the first half of the Great Development Technique.

"Originally, I had wanted to spend the last years of my life here, but who knew that my breakthrough to the third layer of the Great Development Technique was just around the corner? This caused

my desire for revenge to greatly rise. In a moment of confusion, I contacted a group of my loyal subordinates, asking them to steal the incantations for the final three layers for me, but who knew that my fate would turn out this way! I don't know if they were captured after failing to steal it or if they directly betrayed me!"

Senior Martial Brother Lin spoke slowly this time and in great detail, but when he reached the end, his voice was filled with wrath and objection!

Han Li coldly watched the other person's soul vent its anger and didn't make any moves. When the other person had finally calmed down somewhat, he continued to interrogate without politeness:

"What exactly is the secret that you just mentioned?"

"This.....? I hope that....."

"Ah! Stay your hand, I'll speak, I'll tell you right now!"

Senior Martial Brother Lin's soul hesitated a little bit as if it wanted to bring up some conditions. However, Han Li didn't even give him the opportunity to speak any further; he directly gave the other person another taste of suffering, almost shattering Senior Martial Brother Lin's soul. This caused the other person to immediately change his tune, panic-stricken!

"If you won't do this the easy way, we'll do it the hard way! It's best if you don't raise any conditions before telling me everything

that I want to hear.” Han Li’s tone was cold and bone-piercing.

Senior Martial Brother Lin had been completely shaken by Han Li’s vicious tactics; he said hurriedly with fright:

“In actuality, this secret is related to the Great Development Technique; in addition, it has been widely spread in the upper echelons of the Thousand Bamboo School. It’s only that nobody knows whether or not it’s true! However, when my father was still here, he secretly told me that there was a fifty to sixty percent chance that this secret was true!”

“I don’t know when it started, but in the upper echelons of our Thousand Bamboo School, a rumor was secretly spread that anyone who cultivated the Great Development Technique to a high enough layer could form their core much more easily than regular cultivators, and it would be easier for them to break through the bottlenecks in their cultivation. This was because the previous school master’s heir’s success rate of forming his core was extraordinarily high.” After a brief pause, he still told Han Li the secret.

“It can raise one’s chances of entering the Core Formation stage?” The originally cold-faced Han Li finally changed his expression!

“Yes; if Junior Martial Brother is willing to help me find a corpse so that I can refine and control it, I am willing to share the incantation for the first four layers with Junior Martial Brother. Afterward, we can join forces and devise a way to take the remaining layers from the son of that thief surnamed Jin. Then,

we can reach Core Formation together; wouldn't it be much faster?" He began to move his non-existent mouth again, attempting to entice Han Li.

Han Li "hmph"ed and didn't say anything; instead, he lowered his head again and began to think bitterly, causing Senior Martial Brother Lin to instantly feel uneasy yet again!

"There is only a fifty or sixty percent chance that it can raise one's success rate for Core Formation?" Han Li suddenly raised his head and muttered, his eyebrows tightly locked together.

"Junior Martial Brother, a fifty to sixty percent chance is already pretty good. After all, this is related to the formation of a gold core; you should at least try it!" Senior Martial Brother Lin added hastily upon seeing this. In reality, what his father had told him was not actually a fifty to sixty percent chance, but rather a thirty percent chance. As his words were leaving his mouth, the success rate had been doubled.

"Is this Great Development Technique easy to cultivate? Apart from increasing one's divine sense, can it increase one's cultivation base? In addition, how long has Senior Martial Brother Lin been in the Foundation Establishment stage, and how long have you been cultivating this Great Development Technique?" Han Li suddenly asked coldly, raising his eyebrows.

"Cultivating speed is decent, and it can add ever so slightly to your cultivation base....., I successfully reached Foundation Establishment over a hundred years ago; at that time, I was only twenty years old! I started cultivating the Great Development

Technique after reaching Foundation Establishment. Yi, why does Junior Martial Brother ask these questions?”

Senior Martial Brother Lin had never thought that the other person would suddenly ask a train of questions. After staring blankly for a moment, he could only stammer and answer the first two questions because he had not had time to prepare his defenses. However, he answered the last two questions very clearly.

Han Li's expression relaxed as if he were very satisfied with the other person's responses. However, the right hand that was holding onto Senior Martial Brother Lin's soul suddenly flashed with bright white light; then, he tightly closed his fingers! The soul in his hand only had time to let out a tragic yell before it instantly became dots of starlight, forever disappearing from this world.

“What a terrible coincidence! The thing I hate the most is being possessed by other people; this reminded me of some not-so-pleasant things. In addition, although I am truly piqued by the Great Development Technique, it is difficult to cultivate and cannot increase one's magic power. How could I cultivate it as my primary cultivation technique!”

“If my magic power hasn't even been cultivated to the peak of the Foundation Establishment stage, what use would the Great Development Technique be to me even if I were to cultivate it assiduously? This fellow's natural talent was pretty good, but after cultivating this Great Development Technique for nearly a hundred years, he was still only at the peak of the third layer, and because he was distracted, his magic power hovered around that of the mid-Foundation Establishment stage. A fish and a bear's paw,

how could they be so easily linked together? In addition, there is nothing strange about the Thousand Bamboo School's previous school master being able to balance the two and form a golden core. Since he could become a head of a school, he definitely would possess a peerless innate talent and could be considered a one in ten thousand genius. Thus, the credibility of the claim that the Great Development Technique can increase one's chances of forming one's core is even lower! I am definitely not considered a genius, so I have no faith that I can cultivate both my own magic power and the Great Development Technique to any deep point!"

(TL: A fish and a bear's paw means you can't have your cake and eat it too.)

"The worst is that he doesn't even possess the entire Great Development Technique; he even wants me to become an enemy of a sect school. Isn't this just bringing about my own destruction? Even if I were to let you go, who could guarantee that you wouldn't bear a grudge about today's matters and use underhanded methods behind my back!"

"Please tell me, with all these reasons, how could I let you go!?" Han Li muttered to himself, looking at the right hand that had taken the life of a Foundation Establishment cultivator.

Chapter 233: Lei Wanhe

As it stood, this was the second cultivator whom Han Li had eliminated after his primordial spirit abandoned his body.

Within battles, most cultivators wouldn't separate their primordial spirit from their body as it required a certain amount of time to perform; during this period of time, one could not move about freely.

During a battle between cultivators, who would give their enemy enough time to escape!? Long before one would have the time to separate their primordial spirit from their body, they would have already died more than ten times. Furthermore, only those in the Nascent Soul stage or later would be able to separate their primordial spirit from their body in an instant with the help of their Nascent Soul.

This Senior Martial Brother Lin was just as unfortunate as that Yu Zhitong!

(Note: Yu Zhitong was the primordial spirit inside Doctor Mo.)

He originally thought to pass through the location of Han Li's Immortal's cave and head straight to Yellow Maple Valley for treatment and protection. However, he accidentally burst into Han Li's great formation and was completely trapped in the shifting illusions of the formation, unable to escape in the slightest. He helplessly looked on as the poison spread through his body and could only detach his primordial spirit from its corporeal vessel.

This also caused Senior Martial Brother Lin to hold resentment towards the great formation's master. Because he required a flesh body to be revived and assumed Han Li to be his killer, he thought to seize Han Li's body regardless of the consequences.

However, he didn't think in the least that Han Li would be so swift that he could stop Senior Martial Brother Lin's primordial spirit even after being caught off guard and exterminate him.

Now that this person was already dead, Han Li naturally didn't think about the dead man's words in the slightest. He now had to deal with the great problem that was lying outside of his Immortal's cave.

Although the attacks of the Thousand Bamboo School were frightening, Han Li didn't see a single trace of damage on his great formation, putting him at great ease.

Furthermore, he was confident that these people wouldn't dare to stay here too long!

Although this place was remote and could be considered the outskirts of the Tai Yue Mountain Range, it was still an area within Yellow Maple Valley's influence. After performing such loud movements, Han Li did not believe that they weren't afraid of the consequences! He reckoned that even though their current attacks weren't effective against the great formation, they had already reached the stage where it was hard to stop halfway!

(TL: Hard to stop halfway, originally 骑虎难下 “after riding a tiger, it is hard to get off”)

Actually, Han Li wasn't against the idea of handing over Senior Martial Brother Lin's corpse to send them on their way.

However, the trace of one's primordial spirit leaving their body was far too obvious. When they acquire the body, they would only pursue the matter even further! Thus it would be better to make like an ostrich and hide within the great formation. In any case, the other party couldn't break through this Five Elements Reversal Formation.

With this said, Han Li could only praise himself! He actually had such foresight to set up his great formation at the very first chance.

Otherwise, he would certainly have become their prisoner without the slightest of resistance.

However, although there currently appeared to be no problem with the great formation, Han Li didn't dare to return to his Immortal's cave and sleep. He simply took a stone chair out from his home and sat down and rested his eyes.

Since these people used puppets to attack, Han Li was somewhat worried about a persistent attack.

After a whole two hours of indiscriminate attacks, the great formation finally showed the first sign of change. The formation

that was originally as peaceful as water began to flicker with dim azure light. The formation covering the sky began to ripple like water from the light arrow and light beam attacks coming from above.

Seeing this, those from the Thousand Bamboo School began to grow excited. After all, seeing this kind of change meant that the formation could be destroyed by force. With more strength, it was possible to burst the formation open. In truth, if the barrier maintained its originally peaceful appearance, Huang Long and company would have decided to retreat.

Just as the Thousand Bamboo School planned an even greater offensive and Han Li's expression slightly changed, a thunderous roar came from the distance, "You bastards dare to cause such ruckus in the Tai Yue Mountain Range and even dare to attack our sect disciple's Immortal's cave? If you are tired of living, then this old man will send you off!"

This roar left Han Li, who was protected by the great formation, with his ears ringing and with a pale complexion, not to mention those outside of the formation. Having directly heard the roar, they were swaying side to side, nearly falling off their boat.

"It's a Core Formation cultivator! Quickly retreat!"

Although Huang Long seemed to be the crude and ferocious sort, he was actually the shrewdest among them. Thus, after he heard this person's voice contain such power, his face lost color, and he immediately wanted to escape!

But it was clear that Huang Long had underestimated the flight speed and the immeasurable magic power of a Core Formation cultivator! Just as those several people were putting away their puppets in a panic and intending to escape, thunder and lightning suddenly appeared on the horizon. White light flew across the sky, closely followed by a strand of silver light. In a blink of an eye, it arrived in front of them, scaring them so much that their spirits nearly left their body. They were unable to retrieve the remaining puppets and instead jumped up to escape individually.

However, the huge streak of silver light that spanned over thirty meters simply didn't give Huang Long and company any chance. The streak of light suddenly separated into six or seven smaller silver light streaks, surrounding those from the Thousand Bamboo School, all of whom were already in mid-flight.

“Senior, please spare our lives. We....”

Huang Long grew terrified, and he hastily wanted to say something. However, these silver lights didn't stop in the slightest. They lightly coiled around them. Then after several soft thunderclaps, these people who were vainly trying to escape had all turned to ash. Huang Long did not have the fortune to escape this end.

At this moment, all of the silver lights converged into one, revealing a very large fatty.

All that was seen of his eyes were two slits. His chins were folded

with many layers; it was unknown how many there truly were. In addition, his waist was as thick as a barrel. This was undoubtedly the fattest person Han Li had seen in his lifetime.

But it was this very person who was able to become a Core Formation cultivator. Furthermore, from the techniques he used, it seemed that he had lightning attribute mutated spiritual roots. This caused Han Li to be greatly shocked.

Regardless of the newcomer's appearance, this person did break Han Li's encirclement. Furthermore, this person was an elder from Yellow Maple Valley. As a result, after Han Li witnessed the extermination of the fellows from Thousand Bamboo School, Han Li opened his great formation without the slightest of hesitation and hastily flew up on a magic tool to greet him.

When he was in front of the fatty, Han Li respectfully saluted him, "Martial Nephew Han Li pay his respects to Martial Senior. Great thanks to this Martial Senior's assistance! If it weren't for Martial Senior, my life may not have been guaranteed!"

Ever since Han Li was flying up, the fatty had been sizing up Han Li with his eye slits. When he saw Han Li respectfully greet him, his huge face revealed a slight smile. It seemed he had a pretty good first impression toward Han Li.

"I am your Martial Senior, Lei Wanhe. You can call me Martial Senior Lei! How could these people from the Thousand Bamboo School attack you without cause? Could it be that you provoked them?" The fatty dove straight to the heart of the matter. It could clearly be seen that this Martial Senior Lei was a shrewd person

who wasn't easily fooled.

(TL: 雷万鹤 Lei Wanhe. His name means (Thunder) (Ten Thousand) (Cranes))

Han Li inwardly shivered, but with his expression remained calm as always, he gave this Martial Senior an explanation while omitting some unnecessary details. Naturally, Han Li did not mention his affairs at the Heavenly Star Sect's market city or his extermination of Senior Martial Brother Lin's primordial spirit.

Lei Wanhe remained calm throughout the explanation, but when he heard that Senior Martial Brother Lin had died from poison while inside the formation, he said, "So he turned out to be a fellow from the Thousand Bamboo School. I knew when we took him into Yellow Maple Valley that this person would certainly bring trouble. However, I didn't think that after so many years, there would still be people sent to kill him. That Great School Master Jin's mindset is quite narrow."

This Martial Senior Lei Wanhe didn't reveal any sorrow. After a light sigh, he asked, "Where is Martial Nephew Lin's corpse? Lead me to it!"

"As you wish! Martial Senior, this way!" How could Han Li dare to refuse? He hastily led him into his great formation.

As Han Li walked, he was inwardly rejoicing. Fortunately, since he had been busy with those from the Thousand Bamboo School, he didn't touch the storage pouch on Senior Martial Lin's body.

Otherwise, the situation would become unsightly!

“Yi! This great formation of yours is rather unusual. It seems that even if I didn’t come, those scoundrels still wouldn’t have been able to do anything to you!” Not long after Lei Wanhe entered the Five Elements Reversal Formation, he made out a few of its intricacies.

“Hehe. These are merely high-grade formation flags that I exchanged for quite a bit of money from the market city! How could they enter Martial Senior’s eyes!” When Han Li heard the fatty’s praise, he could not help but rejoice inwardly, but he still spoke quite modestly!

“No, this formation spell of yours has a great origin. Even if I were to try to break through this formation without using any tricks, it would be quite difficult to break through.” Lei Wanhe shook his head as if he were beating a drum with it, continuously disagreeing.

At this moment, the two had arrived. Senior Martial Brother Lin’s corpse was openly lying on his body, completely intact.

When the fatty saw this, he waved the a pair of fans in his hands. The corpse immediately flew to the pair of palm-leaf fans. Lei Wanhe then examined the body without restraint.

“It seems what you said was true. The far east’s Venomous Poison Sect’s poison has spread throughout his body.”

After the fatty finished his inspection, he nodded his head, but his following words caused Han Li to inwardly shiver.

“However, before his body had completely decayed, his primordial spirit should have left his body. Perhaps Martial Nephew Han Li has seen it?” The fatty threw the corpse onto the ground and calmly asked Han Li.

Chapter 234: Restrictions And Spiritual Medicine

When Han Li heard this, he secretly said in his heart, “Sure enough, he asked about this matter!”

However, he still appeared stunned outwardly and exclaimed, “Primordial spirit? This disciple has not seen any sort of primordial spirit; could Senior Martial Brother Li’s primordial spirit have left his body before he died?”

Han Li had decided in his heart long ago that as long as the other person asked about the primordial spirit, he would insist that he didn’t know anything. Could he really tell his Martial Senior that he had extinguished the primordial spirit after it tried to possess him?

“You didn’t see it?”

The fatty gazed at Han Li for a while with an enigmatic smile; his gaze caused Han Li’s to feel unsettled, and his heart thumped repeatedly.

“Mn, since you didn’t see it, Senior Martial Brother Lin’s primordial spirit could have been lost inside the great formation and dissipated on its own!” the fatty said indifferently, his face twisting after a moment.

Hearing this, Han Li let out a sigh.

However, he was very clear in his heart that the fatty did not believe what he said, but based on Martial Senior Lei's seemingly nonchalant attitude towards Senior Martial Brother Lin's survival, he would not investigate too seriously.

After all, everyone knew that the first thing a cultivator's primordial spirit would do after leaving the body was to immediately attempt to take over someone else in order to be revived; however, apart from Han Li, no other cultivators were present in the formation, so the only body that could be possessed would have been Han Li's. Since Han Li was still fine, it could only mean that Senior Martial Brother Lin had failed to possess his body and his primordial spirit had been eliminated.

As for whether or not Han Li's body had been appropriated by Senior Martial Brother Lin's primordial spirit, could Senior Martial Brother Lin be controlling Han Li's physical body?

The answer was even more obvious at a glance!

This was because possessing someone was very harmful to the primordial spirit; even if the possession was successful, there was simply no way to control someone else's body freely without spending at least a week to recover behind closed doors. Naturally, this Martial Senior Lei could see through it.

Thus, both Han Li and Lei Wanhe were both well aware of how Senior Martial Brother Lin's primordial spirit met his end!

However, because his initial impression of Han Li was pretty good and he was too lazy to ask about this kind of matter, this fatty allowed the topic to pass somewhat carelessly. On the other hand, Han Li, who understood clearly what was happening, still pretended to be confused because he knew that no matter what his reasons were, if this matter were to spread, he could not escape from the offense of mutilating a cultivator from the same sect. This would be very unfavorable towards him.

But in this way, Han Li actually felt that this Martial Senior Lei was much more pleasant than his own master.

“Martial Nephew’s cave is truly too crude! How can you welcome outsiders in this way? Although we cultivators aren’t too concerned with these things, it still has to be at least barely passable!” For some reason, this Martial Senior Lei didn’t leave this location after finishing up his business; instead, he stood at the entrance to Han Li’s cave and began to slowly evaluate.

Upon hearing this, Han Li bitterly laughed for a moment; he had only used a few days to leisurely construct this cave; how could he find time to be meticulous? However, Han Li thought of another matter after hearing his Martial Senior mention this.

Thus, after laughing briefly, he respectfully said to Lei Wanhe:

“Martial Nephew has a few matters that I want to ask Martial Senior Lei about. Can Martial Senior Lei come into this disciple’s cave and rest for a moment so that this disciple can slowly explain it to Martial Senior Lei? In addition, this disciple has a few mature medicinal herbs; I want to ask Martial Senior to appraise them so

that this disciple can use them to refine pills with reassurance.”

“Medicinal ingredients!”

The fatty’s expression originally did not change when he heard that Han Li had some questions for him and wanted him to enter his cave. However, when Han Li mentioned that he had a few old medicinal herbs, a trace of a smile appeared on his face, and he nodded in agreement.

Thus, Han Li invited Lei Wanhe into the hollow, large entrance hall; then, he said he would go and retrieve his spiritual herbs and asked Lei Wanhe to wait for a brief moment. Afterward, he hurried into his storage room and retrieved two six or seven hundred-year-old herbs, then returned to the lobby.

Han Li didn’t carry those few spiritual medicines inside of his storage pouch with him at all times to preserve their medicinal properties over a long period of time.

Using jade boxes or other similar magic tools to store spiritual medicines was only a temporary method; over long periods of time, its medicinal strength would still slowly leach away. Thus, practically every cultivator’s cave had a secret storage room. Only in this way could one guarantee the medicinal properties of the spiritual medicine would not be lost.

However, because Han Li was worried that this Martial Senior Lei’s divine sense was extraordinary, thus allowing him to see the items hidden in his storage room as well as the spirit well spring,

he had activated the Five Elements Reversal Formation's divine sense blocking magic much earlier.

Now, if this Martial Senior Lei wanted to snoop around, he would most likely be very disappointed at this moment!

That jade slip had made it very clear that breaking off one's divine sense was very simple to implement as an additional ability, so when this ability had been refined into the set of magic tools, it was similar in strength to the complete formation, not weaker than it in the slightest. This was also the only effect in which it was comparable to the complete formation.

After Han Li had set up the large formation, he had once tested the strength of this ability; as expected, his divine sense could only spread a few feet around him. There was simply no way for him to further increase the range of his divine sense.

As for this Martial Senior Lei, even though he was a Core Formation cultivator and his divine sense would inevitably surpass Han Li's, he most likely would not be able to search beyond the hundred-foot-long entrance hall. This was also the reason why he dared to invite the other person in. Otherwise, the other person could use his divine sense to sweep both the secret storage room and the spirit well spring that he had sealed up.

He believed that this Martial Senior Lei Wanhe most likely did not harbor any ill intentions.

However, it would probably have been worse if he hadn't invited

this Martial Senior Lei into his cave at the beginning, which would only serve to increase the fatty's suspicions. After all, if a Martial Senior were to arrive in front of a junior's cave but wasn't invited into the cave, it would truly be somewhat out of the ordinary.

Even if the other person were to overlook it initially, once they thought about it carefully after the fact, wouldn't it be even more of a disaster?

In addition, there were some things that Han Li actually wanted to ask this fat Martial Senior, and he genuinely wanted to develop some connections with this person. After all, he was a Core Formation cultivator; if Han Li were to build up a positive relationship with this Martial Senior, it would be very beneficial to him in the future.

As Han Li quietly thought this to himself, he held two medicinal boxes in his hand and walked into the entrance hall. Then, in front of Lei Wanhe, he took off the covers of the boxes one by one, asking the other person to perform the so-called identification.

At this time, Lei Wanhe felt very unhappy in his heart.

This was because he had actually sent out his divine sense when Han Li went to retrieve the medicinal ingredients, wanting to survey and size up the extent of his cave.

This wasn't because he had any malicious intentions; rather, it was a subconscious action that he performed as a Core Formation cultivator.

However, his divine sense had only left his body a distance of roughly a hundred feet before it could not continue to disperse even an inch; it felt incredibly sluggish as if five hundred kilograms had been placed on his divine sense!

This caused Lei Wanhe's large face to immediately reveal an expression of shock.

It wasn't that he had never been in circumstances where his divine sense was limited. He had experienced these circumstances many times in the caves of cultivators he had good relations with. This meant that there were some restrictions in place that could cut off one's divine sense.

However, his friends were all Core Formation cultivators; the fact that their caves had these kinds of restrictions was not so strange. However, this Martial Nephew was clearly a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and this cave appeared to have been constructed not long ago. For this kind of restriction to appear in this cave was quite strange indeed!

Lei Wanhe did not actually connect the appearance of this restriction with the formation outside of the cave.

This was because to him, it was already very impressive for the large formation outside the cave to have such a strong defense. If it could also be manipulated to break off one's divine sense, wouldn't it be similar to the great protector formations of some small sects?

How could such a strong restrictive formation appear outside of a Foundation Establishment cultivator's cave!

This Lei Wanhe most likely never could have imagined that Han Li's formation was actually the simplified version of the widely known "Five Elements Reversal Formation"! Even if its magic power was only one-tenth that of the original formation, it would not be much worse than a city faction's great formation!

Thus, when Han Li opened the medicine boxes for him to look at, the fatty's heart was still pondering this matter. His gaze did not actually immediately go towards the contents of the box. It was as if it didn't matter whether he looked inside the box or not!

However, when his gaze finally landed upon the two six or seven hundred-year-old medicinal herbs, his originally laid-back attitude immediately disappeared! As for restrictions and divine sense, he tossed these to the back of his mind.

At this time, Lei Wanhe's eyes existed solely for these two medicinal herbs that released a very pressing Spiritual Qi!

"This disciple bought these two spiritual medicines in the secular world for quite a few spirit stones; however, Martial Nephew's experience was too shallow, and I had no way of determining the age of the medicine, which is why I never used them. Martial Senior Lei's arrival today is very timely; you can help Martial Nephew identify them!"

"Mn!"

Lei Wanhe didn't hear what Han Li said at all! He carelessly "Mn"ed a few times before carefully picking up a spiritual medicine and scrutinizing it in detail.

Han Li secretly watched the other person's expressions very carefully and lightly smiled in his heart. It seemed he had picked the correct spiritual medicines!

He had heard others mention that Core Formation cultivators' need for spiritual medicine greatly surpassed that of Foundation Establishment cultivators.

After reaching the realm of Core Formation, one mustn't easily say that they wished to turn their Core into a Nascent Soul. It wasn't a matter of simply cultivating one's magic power a layer higher, it was a matter that was beyond difficult.

Thus, taking lots of medicinal pills became the common way for Core Formation cultivators to raise their magic power.

Chapter 235: Han Li's Intentions

The common medicine pills of this world were of no use to a Core Formation cultivator.

Only medicine pills refined with medicine ingredients that were aged over several hundred years and a few spiritual medicines that were born from Heaven and Earth could increase the speed of their cultivation. Thus, Core Formation cultivators would have to travel far and spend a majority of their time to search and scrape together extremely rare medicinal ingredients.

This was also why when Li Huayuan saw the great amount of spiritual medicines Han Li took out from the forbidden area, he fundamentally thought of every means to immediately accept him as a disciple. He was truly too covetous toward these spiritual medicines of Heaven and Earth!

Actually, even if Li Huayuan hadn't been the one to bring the group to the forbidden area and it was instead Lei Wanhe or another Core Formation cultivator, it was unlikely they would've let a portion of Han Li's spiritual medicines slip by. In most cases, they would've used a similar trick. Li Huayuan, on the other hand, was truly a bit stingy and only made Han Li an in-name disciple!

However, taking medicine pills was only of assistance toward progressing one's magic power. They still had to seclude themselves in meditation and absorb Spiritual Qi for a time. Bitter and diligent cultivation was the true way to turn Spiritual Qi into one's own magic power!

Otherwise, if one took medicine pills and didn't spend time to refine Spiritual Qi afterwards, it would be of no effect and wouldn't increase one's magic power in the slightest. After all, external Spiritual Qi and one's magic power were fundamentally two different things.

There were also ancient records of people who took-heaven defying medicine pills, resulting in their bodies exploding. As a result, wanton use of medicine pill beyond one's limits could be extremely dangerous.

In addition to increasing magic power, when one encountered a bottleneck, using the spiritual power of the medicine pill to break through was a common action taken by many cultivators; its common use further proved its efficacy.

Cultivators who could break through bottlenecks without drawing the support of medicinal power were far too few in number in the cultivation world. Furthermore, they were all geniuses who appeared only once every hundred years.

Those possessing heavenly spiritual roots were the ones with the greatest aptitude, but when those possessing mutated spiritual roots came across a bottleneck, they had no method to break through without using medicine pills; they were similar to those possessing ordinary spiritual roots in this aspect.

This cultivator Lei Wanhe happened to have come across this sort of bottleneck. Thus, in order to refine supplementary medicine pills, he had gone on a search in the secular world and had just returned.

However on this trip, he didn't have much luck at all. Apart from two medicinal herbs that were slightly older than four hundred years old, he had ended up empty handed. This caused him to hold a belly full of grievances!

This was also the primary reason why he immediately killed the cultivators from the Thousand Bamboo School when he laid eyes on them. If he hadn't vented his feelings at that very moment, his mood would likely not have improved for quite a long time. It could only be said that Huang Long and his company were too unfortunate and happened to run into this foul-mooded demon.

Up to this moment, Lei Wanhe's mood was continuously fluctuating

In his three-hundred-year-long experience as a cultivator, he had never seen such spiritual herbs before. When these two spiritual herbs entered his eyes, he immediately made an accurate judgment of their age. He couldn't help but become exalted after doing so.

He was currently planning to refine Soul Strengthening Pills but was lacking medicinal herbs that had reached a maturity of five hundred years; thus, he went on this trip that had nearly taken a full year. However, after browsing everywhere, including the State of Yue's large and small market cities as well as the great medicine stores of the mortal world, he still hadn't found any medicinal ingredients that satisfied him.

He could only reluctantly take the two mediocre four hundred

year-old herbs and make his preparations!

However, he knew in his heart that using these spiritual herbs to refine the Soul Strengthening Pills wouldn't be enough. Perhaps their medicinal efficacy would be greatly reduced when he created them and wouldn't be of much assistance to him. However, he truly did not have any appropriate core medicines at hand; could he even refine them?

He continued his search, but he only ended up squandering his time.

Even if a great medicinal ingredient had actually appeared somewhere, it would have long been hastily acquired by a cultivation sect or clan. By the time he arrived, there wouldn't be a single strand of medicine left. As for the cultivation worlds of nearby countries, looking there would be even more uncertain!

That was why when he heard that this Martial Nephew had medicinal ingredients of a certain maturity, his heart beated. He decided to take a look, entering the incomparably crude and simple cave dwelling.

Actually, Lei Wanhe thought to himself, "How could a Foundation Establishment disciple possibly stumble on good medicinal ingredients? It's most likely a two or three hundred year-old medicinal herb."

After all, he had searched for such a long time but could only acquire four hundred year-old medicinal ingredients. This was also

because he was a Core Formation Expert; no one dared to compete with him over them.

All of a sudden, this pair of six to seven hundred year-old medicinal herbs before him. This caused him to become absolutely baffled and overly joyous from the surprise!

Thus, although it seemed that his eyes were staring at the two medicinal herbs, appraising it, he was actually already considering how he would ask this Martial Nephew to hand it over to him.

After all, leaving such rare items in this Martial Nephew's hand would be far too much of a waste! They would reach their greatest potential in the hands of this great cultivator Lei if he refined them into pills.

However, he was also an old fox of many years; he had already thought of a good excuse in the blink of an eye.

He coughed two times, and after reluctantly returning the medicinal herbs to the case, he turned his nearly obscured neck toward Han Li and amiably said, "These two medicinal herbs are truly rarely-seen items of value; they are over six and seven hundred years of age! Martial Nephew must have spilled quite a bit of blood to acquire them!"

"That's right. This disciple spent quite a bit of strength to acquire them from an action at a secret store! At that time, there was also a thousand year-old spiritual herb that appeared; unfortunately, this disciple lacked the power to acquire it. He could only helplessly

look on as others bought it. This caused disciple to feel rather regretful!” Han Li replied with half-truths.

“A secret store even had thousand year-old herbs!”

When the fatty heard this, he nearly jumped up from his stone seat!

Hearing Han Li speak of this regretful affair, he felt so much distress. It was as if his heart was being gouged out.

To think that a Core Formation Cultivator who racked his brain on how to find spiritual herbs and spiritual medicines and visited secret stores of all locations and even seven or eight clans, could miss such a fortuitous event such as this? If he had been there, no such treasure would be able to escape his grasp! Even if he had to spend more spirit stones, he absolutely would be willing to!

As he thought of such an extremely rare and great opportunity, he looked at the brat before him who had let it go. Panting with rage, the fatty wanted to boldly hold Han Li’s neck in his hands and interrogate him! He would do this despite clearly knowing that the other party was a Foundation Establishment Disciple who couldn’t afford such an extremely expensive item.

“Fine. A miss is a miss! Perhaps there will be another opportunity in the future!”

The fatty eventually calmed himself down and had no choice but

to reluctantly say a few words of comfort toward Han Li. After all, he still planned to acquire his two spiritual herbs! He couldn't let these herbs slip from his fingers.

“Martial Nephew Han, how do you intend to use these two spiritual herbs? Could it be that you're thinking of handing it over to the sect's pill-refining experts? But as your Martial Senior, I must warn you that the pill-refining experts in our Yellow Maple Valley are truly terrible! If you were to deliver such precious items to them, they would absolutely extort you. Your losses would be truly great!” the fatty advised, using the sincere and earnest manner of an elder.

“How could I give it to them to refine! Disciple intended to use these spiritual medicines to exchange for a few items! After all, just to buy these medicinal herbs, this disciple nearly lost a family fortune! How could I easily squander them?” Han Li shook his head. His words caused Lei Wanhe to feel greatly surprised, making him choke on his previously prepared script.

However, the fatty had a second thought: “This Martial Nephew wants items in exchange for the medicinal herbs? Is that all he wants? On the basis of my own status as a Core Formation Expert, apart from those extremely scarce pill and tool-refining ingredients, how could I not satisfy this disciple? This is a good opportunity to fairly and honorably exchange for it!”

With this thought, Lei Wanhe's eyes grew more squinted from smiling, making him appear increasingly more amiable.

“What items does Martial Nephew Han want? The collection that

this Martial Senior has procured over the past several hundred years is not small! Perhaps I have items that will satisfy Martial Nephew,” The fatty happily stated as he blinked his small eyes.

“Ah! Could it be that Martial Senior wants these spiritual herbs? If it’s like that, this disciple can give a herb to Martial Senior as a Junior’s filial offering!” At this moment, Han Li appeared to have realized this and quickly spoke with reverence.

When Lei Wanhe saw that Han Li was so quick-witted to actually not bring up the matter of the exchange and instead immediately offer an herb as a gift, he could not help but feel greatly happy; Han Li also became increasingly more pleasant to look at.

However, the fatty’s goal was both of the herbs! There was a still one herb left, and he would hate to have to let it go.

As a result, Lei Wanhe waved his hand and grandly said, “Martial Nephew Han, what is this? Could it be that I, Lei Wanhe, am someone who covets the items of his Juniors? Do not hesitate to say what you need. Martial Senior will immediately find it and exchange with you fairly. I absolutely won’t let Martial Nephew suffer any losses! Do you want to exchange it for a top-grade magic tool? Or any medicinal pills that you currently need?”

When Han Li heard the other party’s grand words, he grew greatly happy. He had maneuvered in such a large circle, waiting for these words to be spoken out loud. However, with his outward appearance hesitant, he said in embarrassment, “I will not hide this from Martial Senior Lei. Disciple is very interesting in the Dao of Pill-refinement. However, the storage room in Yue Lu Hall

doesn't have any practical pill-refining recipes. Disciple later found out that the pill-refining skills of ancient times has nearly died out. The current pill-refining skills of my fellow martial disciples and Seniors were all either bitterly researched for several tens of generations or happened to be discovered from ancient ruins. Each are as precious as one's own life and are not easily acquired. Thus, disciple intended to use these two spiritual herbs to exchange for pill formulas that he could use for himself!"

Chapter 236: Ancient Formula

“Exchange for pill formulas?”

The fatty’s originally smiling expression instantly froze!

“This disciple knows that pill formulas are precious to every Martial Brother and Senior, so I won’t be too picky! It’s enough as long as it can slightly raise this disciple’s cultivating speed in Foundation Establishment. I will definitely not pick and choose!” Han Li said very sincerely.

After a certain conversation with the small old man from whom Han Li had learned about the circumstances behind pill formulas in the cultivating world, he racked his brains on how to obtain a few pill formulas for his own uses. After all, he owned a secret technique for ripening medicinal herbs; how could he not exploit this advantage as much as he could!

However, the slightly better pill formulas all landed in the hands of Core Formation cultivators; even if Foundation Establishment disciples had one or two pill formulas, they could only refine insignificant medicine pills. Thus, his original plan was based off of his master, Li Huayuan, but since he had run into this Martial Senior Lei, Han Li immediately changed the target of his plan.

No matter how one looked at it, this Martial Senior Lei was easier to manipulate than that master of his.

This was not merely Han Li’s intuition; Li Huayuan was truly too

stingy towards this in-name disciple of his. In addition, he was even more demanding and restricting because of their master-disciple relationship.

Most likely, if today's methods had been used on Li Huayuan, Han Li's master would only need to make an understatement and say, "Good filial piety!", taking away these two spiritual medicines in a justified way. Han Li would have to act as if he had been moved to tears and thank his master for kindly accepting his offering.

Now, with great difficulty, he had finally encountered another Core Formation cultivator, so naturally he wanted to seize this rare opportunity.

"You want to exchange medicinal formulas? This truly is a very tricky matter." Lei Wanhe's expression finally eased up after he seemingly thought of something. Then, his eyebrows became tightly knit, as if he were uncertain about it!

Upon seeing this, Han Li did not feel disappointed; in fact, he began to yell "There's a chance!" in his heart. Otherwise, this Martial Senior Lei would not have this kind of an expression.

"As long as it's useful to this disciple, any pill formula is fine; Martial Nephew won't make things difficult for Martial Senior!" Han Li hurriedly lowered his demands a notch.

"Martial Nephew Han! Martial Senior does have some pretty good pill formulas, but these things are all the foundational,

secretly transmitted formulas that only my clan possesses; I truly cannot bring them out to exchange with you!” Lei Wanhe said with regret, shaking his head.

Han Li was incredibly disappointed after hearing this! He didn’t attempt to cover up any of his emotions, so when the fatty noticed this, he began to laugh and said:

“Although I cannot exchange my clan’s pill formulas with you, I still have a few ancient formulas on hand! Some I found within historical ruins, while others I obtained by exchanging with friends. There’d be no problem if I were to exchange them with you.”

“Really? Then this disciple thanks Martial Senior!” Han Li hurriedly thanked with joy.

“Wait until I finish speaking, it’s still too early to thank me!” the fatty interjected disapprovingly, waving his hand.

“Since we are going to make an exchange, as a Martial Senior, I need to make one thing clear,” the fatty said seriously, causing Han Li to be startled slightly!

“Please, Martial Senior, say it; this disciple will definitely listen to your teachings!” Han Li immediately answered respectfully.

“What do you mean listening to my teachings? I want to tell you the bad news first before you regret it in the future!” Lei Wanhe

glanced at Han Li and added indifferently.

“If you follow these ancient formulas to refine medicinal pills, the result will all be genuine top-grade spiritual pills. But most importantly, the ingredients of these pill formulas are truly too difficult to find! I don’t know if you will be able to obtain these items. Of course, although these ingredients are difficult to find, they definitely do exist in this realm. It’s not the same as some other ancient formulas, where the ingredients have already gone extinct for an unknown number of years! In reality, many of the newly researched pill formulas are only the results of testing many ancient formulas with substitute ingredients, so although the ingredients for refining pills are there, the pills’ effectiveness decreased significantly. This is truly something that the cultivation world can do nothing about!”

The fatty’s words shocked Han Li multiple times upon hearing them. However, he still understood the other person’s meaning.

“Martial Senior’s meaning is?”

“It’s very easy; after you obtain the pill formulas, if you truly can’t find all the ingredients to refine the pills, look for a substitute and try it out. Who knows, there might be a chance you’ll succeed!” the fatty solemnly said to Han Li.

When Han Li heard this, he was speechless! However, he was clear in his heart that this Martial Senior probably felt that the ingredients for the pill formulas he was about to exchange for were truly too difficult to obtain. Most likely, he felt somewhat sorry; thus, he gave Han Li a reminder!

It seemed in this way that Martial Senior Lei's integrity was not too bad! Han Li secretly thought this, but he nonetheless put on a lovable outward appearance, repeatedly saying "okay", demonstrating that he was not considering backing out from the exchange!

Seeing this, Lei Wanhe was extremely happy in his heart. He still felt that he had taken advantage of this Martial Nephew too much and felt somewhat sorry! After thinking for a moment, he spoke once again:

"How about this, you have two spiritual herbs here! We'll exchange one herb for one formula! This Martial Senior can't let you take too much of a loss!"

When Han Li heard this, he stared blankly for a moment! However, immediately afterward he began to exult with joy, and his positive feeling for this Martial Senior Lei instantly increased greatly!

He repeatedly thanked Lei Wanhe; this time, Han Li said it out of complete sincerity without any pretense!

"Enough. This is the list of pill formulas. Pick two! All of the medicinal pill attributes and the necessary ingredients are listed in there. When you have finished picking, I will give you the actual pill formulas!" Saying this, the fatty pulled out a jade slip and tossed it towards Han Li.

When Han Li excitedly received this item, he felt that something was strange! When had this Martial Senior prepared this catalog!?

But this question only flashed briefly in the back of his mind. Han Li received the jade slip, then very carefully scanned it, looking for any appropriate pill formulas.

This Spirit Gathering Pill and this Qi Refining Powder!” Han Li retrieved his consciousness from the jade slip then excitedly exclaimed.

“Spirit Gathering Pill, Qi Refining Powder?”

The fatty indifferently nodded his head after hearing this and didn’t say anything. He immediately pulled out two more jade slips from his storage pouch and tossed them out.

“Alright, it’s no longer early; I should be heading back!” The fatty happily stored the spiritual herbs on the table, then immediately said his goodbyes and left. Now that he had gathered all his ingredients, he hurried back to refine his own Soul Strengthening Pill!

Upon hearing this, Han Li hurriedly stood up to escort him out.

However, when Han Li was escorting him to the cave entrance, he suddenly remembered something. He then asked the other person about the whereabouts and cave location of his master, Li Huayuan.

When the fatty heard that Han Li was actually Li Huayuan's in-name disciple, his shock was not small; however, he still told Han Li the location, then flew away on a streak of silver light.

Han Li watched Lei Wanhe completely disappear before happily pulling out the jade slips with the pill formulas on them, playing around with them for a while. After a long time, he turned around, wanting to return to his cave!

However, Han Li had only taken two steps before an object near the cave attracted his attention. With a glance, it was actually Senior Martial Brother Lin's body lying on the ground, curled up; it even preserved the posture of having been thrown out by the fatty.

Han Li started for a moment, then walked towards it without hesitation. When he reached the corpse, he bent down and began to search.

He remembered very clearly that Martial Senior Lei had not touched anything on the corpse. He didn't know whether it was because he was too ashamed to do it in front of a junior like him, or if the items of a Foundation Establishment disciple simply couldn't enter his eyes.

As expected, Han Li found a storage pouch on the corpse's waist.

This caused Han Li to begin to grin widely! After all, he was very interested in those puppets; the other person's storage pouch

should have a huge pile of them!

But when Han Li examined the storage pouch, the smile on his face gradually disappeared. The storage pouch actually did not have a single puppet inside of it! Apart from a few spirit stones and two bottles of regular medicinal pills, there was only an unassuming jade slip inside. This caused Han Li's fired up mood to immediately be extinguished!

“He clearly controlled so many puppets that day. How could all of them have disappeared...could they all have been destroyed?” Han Li muttered to himself with an unhappy expression on his face.

Han Li's guess was actually pretty much correct.

On that day, Senior Martial Brother Lin had controlled numerous puppets and was able to fight evenly with his opponents. However, when the quadruplets from the Thousand Bamboo Sect killed the two escaping cultivators, they hurried over to harass him. Senior Martial Brother Lin, seeing that the circumstances were not good, immediately detonated all of his puppets. He then took advantage of the confusion and rushed out into the forest. Thus, not even a single mechanical puppet could be found in his storage pouch!

In his disappointment, Han Li carelessly pulled out that jade slip. Then, as if it were a routine, he sent his consciousness into it, then carelessly gave it a few cursory glances.

All of a sudden, Han Li's eyes greatly widened, and the lazy expression on his face instantly froze.

This was because as soon as his divine sense entered the jade slip, three golden words emerged: “Great Development Technique”!

Chapter 237: Paying Respects

“Great Development Technique”. This was what Han Li had repeatedly heard of from Senior Martial Brother Lin, the cultivation technique that the primordial soul tried to entice him with. He was actually able to rummage through his body as he wished and easily found it. This caused Han Li to feel ecstatic beyond belief!

This “Great Development Technique” had actually been carried on Senior Martial Lin’s body! This truly went against his expectations.

Han Li truly didn’t know whether this Senior Martial Brother Lin had been extremely stupid or extremely clever!

He quickly skimmed through the jade slip with the Great Development Technique once through and found that it was as Senior Martial Lin had said. There truly were only incantations up to the fourth layer.

However, what appeared next caused Han Li to feel even more shocked.

After he finished completely looking through the Great Development Technique, a scripture called the “True Puppet Insights” appeared immediately afterward, completely instructing him on how to refine puppet beasts and soldiers of all grades. It was a very detailed and extraordinary puppet creation collection!

After Han Li looked through it for a moment, he immediately withdrew his excited consciousness and wore an extremely happy expression. But after he looked at the jade slip in his hand, he soon thought of something, and his expression suddenly became strange.

The Great Development Technique and the True Puppet Insights were a pair. If he simultaneously cultivated them, they would be flawless together.

So long as he cultivated the both of them to a certain layer, he would surely be like Huang Long, a single person who relied on a great amount of puppets to remain unwavering against several cultivators of the same strength level and didn't give them the slightest opportunity to resist!

This kind of power that suppressed other Foundation Establishment cultivators caused Han Li's heart to thump!

However, he was very clear that there was a certain flaw. It was very possible that it would interfere with his own cultivation and cause his originally indistinct chances of Core Formation to be completely null. This was a matter where the gains did not make up for the losses.

As for the odds that the Great Development Technique could promote Core Formation, Han Li simply did not trust that kind of baseless nonsense.

Han Li lowered his head and pondered for a moment. This was a very hard choice! He shook his head and first put away the jade slip

into his storage bag before deciding to deal with it in the future.

After all, deciding whether to cultivate the Great Development Technique along with the puppet creation technique that had dropped from the sky was a bit too sudden. This was a matter to be thought over after his heart calmed down!

Regardless, this harvest had caused Han Li to be excited! He suddenly thought that although the storage pouches of Huang Long and his fellow disciples had all been thoroughly decimated by Lei Wanhe's lightning attribute sword light, there were a few puppets that they had not retrieved in time still standing outside the formation.

These were good items that would be a waste not to acquire!

With this thought, Han Li left the great formation in a good mood.

As expected, not far from the formation's outer boundary, he found many palm-sized puppet soldiers and mechanical beast that had shrunk since nobody was controlling them. However, there weren't as many as Han Li had imagined, only about twenty. The rest had been turned to ash by Lei Wanghe's sword light.

But even if that was the case, Han Li collected them one by one while in high spirits.

In one moment, he managed to sweep up so many good items.

Han Li still wished to continue, wishing for hundreds of more puppet soldiers to appear before his eyes so he could gather them all. Han Li found this attitude of his to be laughable; this greed was truly insatiable!

After a few words of self-mockery, Han Li returned to his Immortal's cave and prepared to study the ancient formulas. The next day he would go to where his master, Li Huayuan, lived and see whether or not he could get some decent cultivation techniques.

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The morning of the next day. Han Li stood on his Divine Wind Boat and flew straight toward the eastern part of the Tai Yue Mountain Range.

Yesterday, Lei Wanhe had told him that his master's Immortal's cave was located at the peak of a particular mountain. It also seemed that Li Huayuan was busy with something inside his Immortal's cave. If there was a moment to go find him, now was the time.

With the speed of the Divine Wind Boat, Han Li didn't have to spend much time to find the region that Lei Wanhe had pointed out. As expected, the location was well hidden by an azure mountain and green rivers.

Han Li stood at the mountain peak above a huge waterfall and took out a sound transmission talisman from his bosom. He softly

spoke a few words and then threw it out. The talisman then turned into a stream of fiery light, rushing toward the huge waterfall and disappearing from sight.

After the time it took an incense stick to burn, the curtain of water separated, revealing a large cave. Then, from within, a slim Confucian scholar who appeared over thirty years old flew out. When he saw Han Li, he immediately gave a warm greeting, “Are you Junior Martial Disciple Han? This one is Master’s eldest disciple, Yu Kun. You can call me Senior Martial Brother Yu!”

After the Confucian scholar said this, he flew down with great ease, arriving by Han Li’s side. He then looked at Han Li with a wide smile.

“I pay respects to Eldest Senior Martial Brother!” Han Li shouted this out of extremely caution.

When this Eldest Senior Martial Brother Yu Kun saw Han Li’s expression and his well-behaved greeting, his smile became even stronger. He said even more amiably, “Don’t call me Eldest Senior Martial Brother. Eldest Senior Martial Brother? That is far too formal! Just address me as Senior Martial Brother Yu. I have already heard of Junior Martial Brother’s situation from Master. Junior Martial Brother Han was actually able to acquire such a large harvest from the Trial by Blood and Fire. That truly was a remarkable feat!” Yu Kun repeatedly praised him.

Han Li played along with a few forced laughs. He didn’t know why this person was so courteous to this in-name disciple; it caused him to be quite uneasy!

“I originally heard that Junior Martial Disciple’s aptitude wasn’t very good. But now, I see you have actually reached Foundation Establishment. This is truly a matter worthy of celebration!”

Yu Kun seemed to have been long aware that Han Li had reached Foundation Establishment. As a result, he hadn’t expressed any surprise toward Han Li’s success in entering Foundation Establishment. However, he still incessantly congratulated Han Li; this caused Han Li to become even more suspicious and vigilant.

“That’s right, Master is still waiting inside the cave for Junior Martial Disciple! It’s better to not let our elders wait for long. Let’s first enter the Green Ripple Cave!” It seemed Yu Kun had just thought of something. After he patted the back of his head, he said this with a chuckle.

When Han Li saw the other party’s expression, the corner of his mouth twitched, but his face maintained a solemn and respectful expression. He agreed at once and flew through the water curtain.

After he passed through the water curtain, a small, naturally-formed valley appeared before his eyes. Not only was it as beautiful as a spring day, but the trees were green and the water clear. Furthermore, there were a few remarkably strange small animals jumping about in an adorable manner!

“This is...?” Han Li’s mind tumbled! The scene before him... could it be that his own master, a respected expert, was fond of raising small animals? The thought barged into Han Li’s mind

unexpectedly!

“Hehe! What? Is Junior Martial Brother surprised? You’re not the only one who reacted this way. Every visitor that comes is astonished! However, these weren’t raised by Master but rather are the treasures of Master’s wife! You mustn’t harm them by any means, else Martial Mother will absolutely end you!” Yu Kun chuckled, revealing an ‘I already knew you would be greatly surprised’ expression.

“Master’s wife?”

“That’s right. Although Mistress Zan is only at mid-stage Foundation Establishment, the Master dotes on her very much! You must act good-natured and get along well with her.” Yu Kun said this as he shrugged his shoulders.

Yu Kun brought him further into the large cave, where much to Han Li’s surprise, he saw not only his master, Li Huayuan, but also a young, beautiful, twenty-seven or twenty-eight year-old woman!

Nothing needed to be said about his own master’s ice cold face but when he saw Han Li, Li Huayuan revealed a slight smile. Although Han Li thought the young woman was beautiful, how could he dare to look in front of Li Huayuan! He only took a quick look and stepped forward, respectfully saluting, “Disciple Han Li greets Master!”

“En! You’ve come! This is your master’s wife, greet her as well!” Li Huayuan was greatly satisfied with Han Li’s respectful and

solemn bearing and pointed to the young woman at his side.

“Disciple pays respects to Master’s wife!” Han Li inwardly sighed. He could only salute to this woman who didn’t seem much older than himself.

“That’s enough, no need to be overly polite!” When the young woman saw Han Li step forward to pay his respects, she said this with a smile. Her voice was soft and pleasant, displaying the sweet temper of a woman from a river village. As expected, she was an extremely dainty woman!

“Han Li, I’ve only heard of the matter of your success into Foundation Establishment a few days ago! To tell the truth, this matter was rather hard for me to believe and amazed me by no small amount!” Li Huayuan said this with a smile and an incomparably gentle tone. This caused Han Li to truly feel overwhelmed by his superior’s favor.

“This was disciple’s fluke. Achieving Foundation Establishment also shocked this disciple!” Han Li’s face was slightly red, appearing as if he were embarrassed.

“Hehe! Great luck also reflects one’s own aptitude. Otherwise, wouldn’t those born with outstanding aptitudes have even greater luck?” Li Hua Yuan shook his head and said this with a smile.

“Ah! This...” Not once did Han Li think he would feel so embarrassed and be rendered speechless!

Chapter 238: Yu Kun's Fearsomeness

“Humph, this fellow has only been a disciple for a short while; don’t use a lecturing tone immediately upon meeting him!” the young woman said gently to Li Huayuan upon seeing Han Li’s uncomfortable appearance, a trace of laughter in her eyes.

“Okay! Husband knows. No matter what, this good disciple is also my madame’s savior; as his master, I must compensate him well!

Li Huayuan glanced at the young woman with a tender gaze, then turned around and said to Yu Kun standing to the side:

“You can withdraw for now; your master’s wife and I are going to talk individually with your Junior Martial Brother Han. Don’t let anybody disturb us!”

“As you command, Master!”

Yu Kun respectfully replied, then stole an envious glance at Han Li before quietly withdrawing.

“Savior? Reward?”

Now, Han Li was truly stunned; he really didn’t know when these two words had suddenly become related to him! When had he earned a reward for saving someone, and how could he himself not know about it?

Seeing Han Li's confused appearance, the young woman couldn't help but laugh and said:

“Lord Husband, why don't you explain it to him! Your disciple doesn't know anything yet; don't let his head be filled with fog!”

Hearing the young woman's words, Li Huayuan lightly smiled, and explained to Han Li, nodding:

“Han Li! By now you should know the reason why I accepted you as my disciple back then! There's no embarrassment for me to talk about it; as your elder, I truly did covet your spiritual medicines. Thus, I used the excuse of receiving you as my disciple to take away a half of your portion. Otherwise, you should have received two Foundation Establishment Pills, not just one! However, although I confess that I caused your rewards to decrease for no apparent reason, you could have in turn also used my reputation to your advantage, and people wouldn't lightly offend you. This could be considered my way of making things up to you. After all, with regards to your natural talent back then, even if you were to have an extra Foundation Establishment Pill, it seemed like your chances of successfully establishing your Foundation were nonexistent!”

Li Huayuan said, his expression nonchalant as if he did not feel that there was anything inappropriate about what he had done!

“But soon after, the situation changed; not long after I obtained these spiritual medicines and was about to refine them into pills

that could increase one's magic power, an accident suddenly occurred while my wife was cultivating, plunging her into danger. Luckily, I hadn't used your spiritual medicines yet, and thus I was able to temporarily preserve her life. In the few years afterward, I was able to use the remaining spiritual medicines to refine a pill that could save her, causing my wife to finally recover in the past few days! Because of this, when I told my wife about the origins of these spiritual medicines, my wife immediately expressed that I must reward you. After all, her life was preserved solely because of your spiritual medicines. You could also be considered her savior!"

When Li Huayuan talked about the young woman's life-threatening condition, his expression changed, as if he were reliving the dangerous circumstances of those times. It seemed as if he really dearly loved the young woman beside him.

"After I heard her say that, I felt that what she said was very reasonable, and so I wanted to officially accept you as my disciple before you reached the Foundation Establishment stage. But who knew that before I could make a move, I had already received the news that you had successfully established your Foundation; this really surprised me! After all, I had previously said that as long as you entered the Foundation Establishment stage, I would officially accept you as my disciple. Thus, this could no longer be considered some kind of reward. I could only think of other ways within my abilities to reward you"

Li Huayuan finally explained the whole situation once, causing Han Li to become somewhat dazed upon hearing it.

He never expected that meat pies falling from the sky could

actually land on his head; even when he heard Li Huayuan personally say that he would reward him, Han Li still did not dare to believe it. Instead, he could only stand there, stunned.

“What about this? Since it seems you haven’t thought it through yet, you can think about it in your cave for a day; tomorrow morning, you can come to your master and raise a request. You have to think about it carefully; normally your master is not a very generous person, so this is an opportunity that is hard to come by!” the young woman gently said to Han Li, glancing at Li Huayuan.

This caused Li Huayuan to dryly laugh a few times as if he were somewhat embarrassed!

Han Li, who finally regained consciousness, hesitated for a moment. Originally, he wanted to request a cultivation technique, but upon being reminded by his master’s wife, he could not refuse the other person’s good intentions, so he nodded his head and accepted.

Then, Li Huayuan called Yu Kun to give Han Li a tour of the cave.

This Senior Martial Brother immediately agreed with a smile, then brought Han Li and walked out. They had not yet left the large lobby when he had already begun to introduce Han Li to the entire cave.

“Master, your Green Ripple Cave is about a few hundred acres in size; as for rooms.....”

The young woman, after seeing Han Li and Yu Kun walk far away, suddenly said to Li Huayuan with a smile:

“Do you think our new disciple can handle Yu Kun’s harassment? Every time I see Yu Kun open his mouth, I feel a headache coming on even if he hasn’t said anything yet! Yu Kun’s long-windedness truly causes many headaches.”

“Yi! Not to mention you, even I have no way of dealing with him! Han Li definitely cannot endure for too long!” Li Huayuan said with helplessness.

“This is also true! But what kind of request do you think this disciple of yours will make?” the young woman suddenly asked as she opened her round eyes. A trace of cunning could be found within them.

“What requests could he make besides pills, cultivation techniques, magic tools, and the sort! If it weren’t for madam’s relentless requests to reward this disciple, I really would not be willing to be so generous.” Li Huayuan had not even handed anything out yet but he already appeared to be in excruciating pain.

“What are you talking about! If you don’t repay his saving grace, the Ice Heart Technique that I cultivate would contain many leaks, and I would not be able to cultivate it to the Great Circle of Completion! Then, in the future, how could I enter the Core Formation stage and spend the rest of my life with you?”

The young woman first gave Li Huayuan a haughty look, but her next sentence was filled with deep affection, causing Li Huayuan to feel greatly moved upon hearing it! He thumped his chest and expressed that he would definitely fulfill Han Li's requests and that he would not allow any troubles to be left in the way of his wife's cultivation.

Han Li naturally did not know that the huge meat pie that fell on his head was actually related to the young woman's cultivation technique.

At that moment, he was following Senior Martial Brother Yu, wandering around, but in his heart, he still felt that the arrival of this kind of good fortune was too sudden! This caused him to feel strangely unsettled.

"Yi, Senior Martial Brother Yu has time to come to this Sword Discussion Hall; how about us Senior Martial Brothers exchange a few magic techniques!"

When Yu Kun had brought Han Li near an extremely large stone room, an extremely buff man just so happened to be walking out of it. When he saw Yu Kun, he carelessly said this. However, his gaze was constantly sweeping over Han Li.

"Who hasn't heard about the combat strength of Fourth Junior Martial Brother's Five Elements magic technique? It is the number one under Master's family! I think I'll pass and not make a fool of myself!" Yu Kun's expression first changed upon hearing the man's words, then laughed and refused.

However, he suddenly turned around and pointed at Han Li while laughing:

“I still haven’t introduced Fourth Junior Martial Brother to this individual; he is the new disciple that Master is going to accept. He is the Junior Martial Brother Han who is soon to become our Eighth Junior Martial Brother!”

“And this is your Fourth Senior Martial Brother Song Meng; you can just call him Senior Martial Brother Song! Everyone come meet each other; after today we will all be Martial Brothers from the same family!”

“Eighth Junior Martial Brother!”

When this fourth Junior Martial Brother heard these words, a radiant light shone out from his eyes, focusing directly on Han Li!

Han Li’s expression did not change, but in his heart, he quietly sighed. This individual was clearly a battle-crazy individual; being gazed at him could not have any good outcomes.

Thus, before this individual even opened his mouth, Han Li spoke first:

“Greetings, Fourth Senior Martial Brother. Junior Martial Brother has just recently entered the Foundation Establishment stage; I ask that Senior Martial Brother take good care of me!”

Having said this, Han Li greeted him.

However, these words from Han Li caused this man to reveal a disappointed expression. He lost interest in Han Li, and after indifferently nodding his head a few times, he didn't glance at Han Li even once. Then, he coldly walked directly between the two of them, leaving to attend to his own business!

Only Han Li and Yu Kun remained, and they looked at each other in dismay for quite some time.

“Haha, Junior Martial Brother Han, please don't take offense; Junior Martial Brother Song just has this kind of a strange temper. Although outwardly he appears somewhat cold, in actuality his personality is pretty good!” It was still Yu Kun who recovered first, and with a few sentences he shook off the awkward atmosphere.

Han Li naturally adopted an understanding attitude, and the two of them immediately continued on their way, laughing and talking.

Although the cave was not small, apart from Li Huayuan and his wife as well as that Song Meng, there were no other people in such a large place. Han Li did not encounter any of the other five Senior Martial Brothers. Afterwards, Han Li learned that the other five were all like him and had their own caves outside; they would occasionally come to pay their respects to Li Huayuan and his wife.

As for Yu Kun and Song Meng, they had grown up next to Li

Huayuan and his wife; as such, they already had very deep feelings for them, so they naturally would stay in this place instead of building their own cave.

As Han Li was idly chatting with Yu Kun, he finally gained some understanding of the other few cultivators; however, he had unwittingly finished touring the entire cave.

This Eldest Senior Martial Brother's spirits seemed to rise the more he spoke, so he just pulled Han Li and began to walk towards his own room, wanting to continue their extended discussion.

Although Han Li felt slightly surprised, he didn't mind, and so he indifferently followed him over. After all, this person was the Eldest Senior Martial Brother, so he still had to give him this face.

In the beginning, he was intently listening to this Eldest Senior Martial Brother, hoping to find a few pieces of useful information.

But not too long after, this Senior Martial Brother Yu's ability to chatter away was revealed to be truly frightening, and Han Li slowly began to experience it firsthand.

The endless flow of words snuck into his head like evil spirits, causing Han Li's head to begin to hurt, having heard them for numerous hours.

It wasn't until this moment that Han Li finally realized the truth: the attitude this Eldest Senior Martial Brother had shown when he

had come to pick Han Li up was not enthusiasm! It was clearly that a hard-to-find guest had finally appeared to satisfy his addiction to flapping his lips!

After another moment, Han Li could not longer take it, his physical fatigue finally growing too extreme. He hurriedly escaped from the other person's room, then found a room used to accommodate guests and collapsed.

Hearing this Senior Martial Brother Yu's verbal attack was truly damaging to one's soul!

Han Li had completely served this person's urges! Han Li's horizons had been broadened; this world actually contained men who could chatter like this!

Chapter 239: Choice

After a day in the Immortal's cave, Han Li stood in front of his Master Li Huayuan and his wife. He then heard his master indifferently say, "Han Li, have you finished thinking about what you want your Master to give you? You can say it now!"

"Disciple wants a cultivation art compatible with him. He hopes Master can give one or two of them!" This didn't need to be deeply thought about. Han Li, who had long known this answer, immediately blurted it out.

When Li Huayuan heard this, he didn't show any surprise and instead faintly smiled to his wife at the side. He seemed to be saying, 'How about it? I wasn't wrong. He wanted a cultivation art, as expected!'

Then he returned his gaze to Han Li and calmly said, "En, your choice isn't bad! First, let Master examine your spiritual roots and then I will decide what cultivation art to give you."

When Han Li heard this, he didn't dare to hesitate and immediately approached him. His master grabbed his wrist and quickly circulated energy around his meridians.

"Apart from metal cultivation techniques, all other attributes can be cultivated! You actually had four attribute spiritual roots, how shocking! On that day, I only saw that you had false spiritual roots but I didn't think it'd be to such a degree!" After a moment of examination, Li Huayuan's expression grew slightly strange, and

he sighed.

When the young woman at the side heard this, she also revealed an expression of slight surprise. She remained silent and could not help but size up Han Li.

“Disciple’s aptitude is inferior and has disappointed Master!” Han Li’s face was a bit red as he replied this with slight shame.

“This is nothing. Since the Heavens have allowed you to reach Foundation Establishment, you surely have your own luck. But since it is like this, your choices for cultivation are a bit troublesome!”

“What do you mean?”

When Han Li heard this, he blinked. Although Han Li did not take the initiative to ask, he displayed great doubt!

“Really! Give disciple a proper explanation. You are always so vague! Actually, what your Master means was that he originally wanted to let you choose a decent cultivation art, but now that he has seen your spiritual root attributes, he’s hesitant! After all, the better the cultivation art, the harder it is to cultivate! It would be better to let you cultivate a simpler cultivation art so that you advance a bit more quickly!” The young woman rebuked Li Huayuan and gave Han Li an explanation with a warm tone.

“That’s right. My wife read my thoughts.” Li Huayuan repeatedly

noded his head. He then continued to explain, “The cultivation arts of Immortal cultivators can generally be classified into three main types in accordance with speed and effects! For the first time, after it is cultivated, one’s magic power progresses at a speed that is similar to that of inferior cultivation arts. However, it grants an supplementary divine ability that can suppress enemies and seize victory; it’s power is likely to be outstanding and extremely suitable for combat. If one’s magic power is at a lower layer, they will be able to, with slight difficulty, prevail against cultivators of a higher layer. Thus, cultivators who know they are unable to enter Core Formation most likely choose this type of cultivation art.”

“The second type of cultivation technique is the exact opposite. These cultivation techniques progress one’s magic powers at an astonishing rate and are easy to cultivate. But naturally there is a flaw; the advantage of the first type of cultivation technique is precisely this type’s fatal flaw. Furthermore, although those who cultivate the second type come across far fewer bottlenecks than those who use the first type of cultivation techniques, this kind of cultivation art has no powerful self-defense methods, and their divine abilities are pathetic! Those who choose this method are doomed to spend their life cultivating and are the weaker among cultivators of the same grade. But similarly, they wish to cultivate to the highest layer in vain pursuit of the Heavenly Dao. Those who choose this path are not few. After all, this is the easiest method to approach Core Formation.”

After Li Huayuan said this, he stopped for a moment and then looked at Han Li with a smile, “What kind of magic technique does disciple wish to use? Perhaps there is a type between these two that fits you?”

When Han Li heard this, he paused for a moment and couldn't help but hesitate; he asked, "Master, were there not three kinds? Why have you only explained two?"

When they both heard Han Li's question, the young woman gave a knowing smile. Li Huayuan faced Han Li and answered, "Apart from the first two types, there are the extraordinarily few cultivation arts that exist of the third type. Many cultivators pursue these top-grade cultivation arts. However, as your master, I do not recommend you cultivate these! Furthermore, none of your seven Senior Martial Brothers chose to cultivate these cultivation arts! Although they combine the several strong aspects of the first two type of cultivation arts, having both great power and astonishing magic progression, they have many restrictions. They are increasingly difficult as one progresses, and they are very dangerous to cultivate. If one is not careful, they will be beyond hope! Your Master's wife cultivates such a top-grade cultivation art but she was not careful and nearly died. Thus, if one cultivates these cultivation arts without transcendent aptitude, it would be a near equivalent to suicide!"

"Although I have two or three of such top-grade cultivation arts, would you be able to succeed with them? Naturally, because I do owe you compensation, if you must choose these top-grade cultivation methods, Master will give them to you. However, if you encounter dangers or difficulties in the future, you will only be able to rely on yourself!"

Li Huayuan clearly did not approve of Han Li selecting these last types of cultivation arts and warned Han Li in advance.

Han Li wrinkled his brow and sunk his head in thought. This was a truly hard decision.

But not long after, Han Li lifted his head with clear eyes. It was obvious that he made his decision.

“Master, please forgive this disciple’s rudeness! Disciple wishes to ask in advance, what cultivation art did Master cultivate?” Han Li suddenly asked.

“Hehe! Your master cultivated the top-grade cultivation technique 《True Sun Arts》. However, your master has a body only second to that of heavenly spiritual poots, a ‘Three Yang Body’. Cultivating this art suited me like a fish to water and was far superior to other cultivation arts! Otherwise, how could Master form his Golden Core?” Although Li Huayuan did not predict Han Li’s question, he had still arrogantly replied.

“Disciple understands. Then disciple will select the second type of magic techniques!” Han Li said with a peaceful expression.

“The second type?”

Li Huayuan’s expression slightly changed, but after a second, it returned to normal. Under the appearance of deep thought, he reexamined Han Li. When the young woman at the side heard this, she also wore a rather interested expression.

“You chose the second choice, so how could Master say anything

against this? If your cultivator's heart is resolute, then Master will truly be grateful. However, you should know the so-called easy refinement of magic power only applies to those with rather good aptitudes. Furthermore, even if they have outstanding aptitudes, only a few of them will be able to cultivate to the peak of Foundation Establishment. Thus, your master leans toward you choosing the first type of cultivation arts. With your prospects of achieving Core Formation so uncertain, at the very least, you'll be able to hold your head high among your fellow Foundation Establishment cultivators and accept no humiliation. In truth, regardless of what type of cultivation art is chosen, those who achieve Core Formation are few in number! Originally..."

Li HuaYuan originally thought to give Han Li a few words of advice, but as he said this, he seemed to have recalled something. With his mood serious, he actually remained silent!

When the young woman to the side saw this, she lightly sighed and said to Han Li, "Han Li, think of this well: What kind of cultivation art do you truly want? Although your choice does not match our thoughts, if your cultivator's heart is truly resolute, your Master will naturally not oppose you. If you overestimate your own abilities and absolutely insist on choosing the top-grade magic techniques, although we as husband and wife will not object, we will be greatly troubled. After all, it would no longer be a question of the resolution of one's cultivator's heart but rather that of biting off far more than one can chew."

"Correct. Your Master's wife has spoken your Master's thoughts. Your Master will not say more. I will only ask you once more, is that your final decision?" Li Huayuan's attention returned just as the young woman finished speaking, and he nodded his head in

approval.

“Yes, Disciple has firmly decided!” After Han Li calmly listened to Li Huayuan’s wife’s words, he replied with a deep tone.

“En, since you’ve made up your mind, follow me to my library. Madame, please wait here. Han Li and I will return in a moment.” When Li Huayuan heard this, he said no more and stood up, bringing Han Li out and leaving the young woman to wait behind.

The library room wasn’t far away from the main hall and also wasn’t very large. It was only a normal-looking short stone room. However, the stone room had a flaming barrier protecting it, denying entry to outsiders.

Li Huayuan stood in front of the barrier. Without care, he extended his finger toward the surface of the barrier and casually swiped, causing the barrier to immediately open a three-meter gap, just enough for two people to enter through.

He then easily pushed open the stone door and led Han Li in.

After Han Li entered, his eyes greatly widened. Inside the room, all sorts of jade slips, book pages, boxes, and collections were suspended in midair, displaying strange lights of all colors. There were more than sixty items; they were Li Huayuan’s collection of cultivation techniques that he had gathered over several hundred years.

“All the items here are under my restrictions. If someone aside from me or my wife personally reaches within, the formation spell within the stone room will immediately activate, and they will be completely trapped inside.” Li Huayuan explained to Han Li with satisfaction. However, Han Li heard the trace of warning within those words, so he repeatedly nodded his head, expressing his understanding.

Chapter 240: Pages Of A Book

Seeing that Han Li was quite discreet, Li Huayuan revealed an expression of satisfaction. Then, he reached his hand out in midair and gently grabbed at something; instantly, a red streak of cloud flew out from his hand, wrapped around a jade slip, and brought it back to his hand.

Li Huayuan didn't even glance at it and directly handed it to Han Li; then, he used the same method to grab seven or eight items in a row before halting. At this time, Han Li was already holding a huge pile of items, too many for his eyes to take in.

“These cultivation techniques can all progress one's magic power quickly, and they are also easy to cultivate; pick one to use as your main cultivation technique. You have to put the other ones back in their original position. When you have finished picking one out, come tell me!” Li Huayuan said to Han Li indifferently. Then, he sat down cross-legged on a prayer mat in the stone room.

Han Li felt that his eyes were seeing stars; although there weren't many cultivation techniques, they all had their own unique attributes.

For example, one of them, the “Essence Gathering Technique”, apart from having a decent speed in increasing one's magic power, also had the “Essence Gathering Spirit Armor”, an incredibly practical minor divine ability. When facing an enemy, in addition to the protection of a defensive magic technique, one could condense one's magic power into spirit armor as an additional layer of protection. It could serve as a life-saving technique, and

the spirit armor's defense could also slowly increase as one progressed in the Essence Gathering Technique.

Another jade slip recorded the just-as-impressive “Mirage Spirit Art”, which also included the “Mirage Shadow” ability. One could produce an avatar exactly like oneself at any time to confuse enemies. The higher one's cultivating layer was, the more avatars one could produce, which would confuse enemies even more.

Apart from these two kinds of cultivation techniques, the other cultivation techniques included small abilities that were extremely suited for escaping despite not being too powerful. It seemed as if the creators of these cultivation techniques were also very clear that these cultivation techniques would not allow individuals to fight fiercely against others; instead, it was more important to flee with one's small life.

However, after Han Li had browsed through all of them once, a golden page inside a jade box jolted Han Li awake.

That was because this page's script and size were too familiar. Han Li confirmed that it was identical to the silver page that he himself possessed! The only difference was that this page seemed to be thinner, and its surface did not have those strange patterns; instead, it was covered with densely packed ancient writings. But when he took a closer look, the technique that was recorded was a common magic technique, the “Essence Concentration Technique”. Its ability was also an extremely average support technique called the “Spirit Gathering Technique” and could only increase the speed at which Spiritual Qi was gathered.

Han Li studied the golden page numerous times, but doing so only increased the uncertainty in his heart. However, he also knew that even though he had a strong urge to pull out the silver page in his storage pouch and compare the two of them, now was not the time to solve this mystery.

Regardless, he had to make a decision now, otherwise he would arouse his master's suspicions.

With this in mind, Han Li hefted this golden page in his hand and made his decision.

As such, he opened his mouth and said to Li Huayuan, who was resting with his eyes closed:

“Master, I have made a decision. I choose this cultivation technique!”

When Li Huayuan heard this, he opened his eyes. Seeing the golden page in his hand, he was slightly startled, but he didn't say anything. He simply nodded his head and brought him out of the stone room.

The young woman had been waiting for the master-disciple pair. When she saw them return, she smiled warmly before asking:

“How is it, did you make a decision?”

“Many thanks for Madame's concern. This disciple has already

made a selection!” Han Li respectfully answered.

“Then I can be at peace!” Hearing this, the young woman smiled happily again. It was as if she cared even more about this matter than Han Li did, which surprised him.

“Alright, since you have been repaid for saving my wife, let us talk about the matter of officially accepting you under my guidance! Are you genuinely willing to enter my tutelage and officially become my disciple?” Li Huayuan suddenly asked, his expression thickening.

Han Li’s heart trembled, and he hurriedly stepped forth, knelt, and said:

“Disciple Han Li’s heart is genuine; I do not dare to have even a trace of pretense.”

Although Han Li spoke in this way, in actuality he began to mutter in his heart:

“If you genuinely take care of me, I will naturally be a hundred percent sincere and willingly be your disciple until the very end. However, if you have any bad intentions, I will not be so silly as to be manipulated by you!”

Li Huayuan naturally did not know the thoughts in Han Li’s heart. Otherwise, he would have exterminated Han Li with one hand a long time ago.

“Right, us cultivators are simple people; from today onwards, you are Li Huayuan’s official disciple. I hope that you’ll diligently cultivate in the future so that my reputation doesn’t wane.” Li Huayuan lightly smiled with a warm expression.

Han Li and Li Huayuan fulfilled the roles of a pious disciple and a compassionate master for a while, but soon after receiving Li Huayuan’s instructions, Han Li bid farewell and left.

As he was leaving the cave, he happened to run into that Eldest Martial Brother Yu. In the end, this individual insisted on sending his Junior Martial Brother out. However, how could Han Li, who had just yesterday experienced firsthand the devilish, unceasing chattering, inflict such pain upon himself? He declined profusely on the spot; in the end, the other person left with a regretful expression, and Han Li was able to escape the entanglement.

As Han Li stood upon the small boat, he couldn’t help but think about all that had happened in the past two days.

His impression of his master, Li Huayuan, was much better than it had been before, especially since his master’s attitude sharply differed from the indifference he showed during the expedition to the forbidden area. He didn’t know if it was because he had saved his master’s wife or because he had successfully established his Foundation, but now he was finally being viewed with importance by this Core Formation cultivator.

Regardless, Han Li finally felt that this trip had not been in vain;

not only did he obtain a large backer in the cultivation world, he also obtained that golden page. Now, he could hope to reveal the secrets hidden in the silver page.

Even if he had no way of unraveling its mysteries, Han Li did not mind; at the very last, he would cultivate the “Essence Concentration Technique”. Although this cultivation technique didn’t have any great effects, Han Li had other ways of protecting himself, so he did not worry about this matter.

When he returned to his own cave, Han Li immediately went into his own room and hurriedly pulled out the gold and silver pages from his storage pouch, carefully comparing the two.

The silver page was still the same as the last time he studied it; Han Li placed both the silver page and the gold page in front of his eyes and superimposed the two. As expected, they were identical in size. With one glance, one could tell that they were closely linked.

Han Li took these two pages, one on the left and one on the right, weighing them individually in each hand. He judged that the silver page was slightly heavier. It seemed as if his speculation that the golden page was somewhat thinner was not incorrect; their thickness was truly different.

Han Li tilted his head and thought for a moment. Suddenly, he took only the silver page and raised it to his eye, carefully scrutinizing the strange patterns on it and stroking it with his hand incessantly.

At this time, his eyes twinkled indefinitely as if there was a very difficult problem ahead of him that he could not make a decision about.

However, an unwavering expression still appeared on Han Li's face.

He suddenly placed the page between his two hands, then he gently rubbed his hands together. Instantly, the silver page was enveloped in a fierce flame, casting a red glow onto Han Li's face. However, he did not care at all, instead staring at the page in the flames without blinking. At this time, the surface of the page was beginning to melt due to high temperatures,

Suddenly, Han Li's expression changed, and then an expression of joy surfaced on his face because the silver page, now with its surface layer melted, actually revealed a golden light — sure enough, the page contained a secret.

Seeing this situation, Han Li carefully controlled the flames, not allowing the golden layer to also be damaged. However, Han Li clearly was overly worried; the newly-revealed golden page seemingly didn't fear being roasted by the fierce flames and didn't warp at all.

When a brand-new golden page was completely revealed, Han Li waved his hand, and the flames immediately disappeared. Then, he began to read the newly-obtained page, his heart beating like crazy.

He only read the first few words before he froze, stunned. His expression instantly became extremely unsightly.

That was because this page was actually a manual written to teach people how to control flying swords and was specifically geared towards those who cultivate sword arts; although it appeared to be extremely remarkable, it was something that Han Li simply did not need.

It seemed as if that bare-footed man from the Giant Sword Sect had cultivated the page's contents. However, though these techniques may have been considered treasures to Qi Condensation disciples, to Han Li, who had reached the 'Great Success' stage of Foundation Establishment, they were only average and simply had no way of piquing his interest.

Han Li was still unwilling to give up!

He closely examined it one more time, even going so far as to use the fierce flames to burn it again, but he made no further discoveries.

The more Han Li looked at this golden page, the more he felt resentful. He had busied himself with this for the greater half of the day!

Having wasted so much time, he actually obtained such a useless item. How could he not feel extremely depressed? Han Li was especially provoked upon seeing the two words "Sword Art" because he had already cultivated an Azure Essence Sword Art;

could it be that he would have to cultivate yet another sword art?

The gloomy-faced Han Li suddenly grabbed the page and threw it into midair. Immediately afterward, he used his right hand and pointed, shooting out an azure sword edge as wide as a bowl, directly hitting the page. Han Li decided to completely destroy this thing, lest he become angry just from looking at it.

With a “puchi”, the explosion that Han Li had expected did not appear; instead, the azure sword edge, like a clay ox entering the sea, landed on the page and instantly disappeared without a trace, as if it had been gobbled up.

(TL: Clay ox entering the sea means disappearing with no hope of returning)

“This is.....” Han Li was very shocked, but immediately afterward his heart moved as his spirits were instantly aroused.

Chapter 241: Three Essence Revolutions

Technique

He raised his hand and cast a “Floating Technique” on the golden page that had fallen in his hand, causing it to float many feet in the air, acting as a target. He then began to use small bursts of Azure Essence sword edges to attack it bit by bit, eagerly gazing at the page which seemed to absorb all of the sword edges like a bottomless pit.

While doing this, Han Li had also tried to shoot an ice arrow towards it to see if that magic spell could also be absorbed. In the end, one arrow caused the page to go flying, scaring Han Li into stopping this kind of risky behavior; he obediently continued to shoot sword edges into it.

Han Li’s Azure Essence sword tips of the fourth layer should have been pretty strong, but the true essence in his body was about to be completely exhausted, yet the page did not respond at all; this caused Han Li to silently complain!

He truly did not know whether or not all his hard work would go to waste if he didn’t satisfy this page’s absorption of sword tips all in one go!

Just as Han Li was conflicted about whether to proceed or stop, the page finally began to change, and the golden light on the page’s surface exploded out. The page was no longer able to absorb the sword tips; instead, it began to reflect them, carving quite a few holes in the walls of the cave.

Han Li repressed the excitement in his heart, and he watched the page's transformation without blinking at all.

The light on the page slowly began to retreat and converged into words of light as large as ants. The page soon became densely dotted with golden light, like the stars in the sky, causing Han Li to feel great shock!

Then, with a "patter", the floating spell suddenly lost its effectiveness, and the golden page fell straight to the ground. Han Li, still in shock, instinctively and immediately stretched out and grabbed the golden page.

But just when Han Li's fingers made contact with this item, it was as if the words of light had found an outlet and rushed in through that hand, fiercely channeling themselves throughout his entire body.

Han Li was greatly shocked, and the color drained from his face! He hurriedly wanted to toss aside the page, but the page forcibly stuck itself onto Han Li's hand as if it were alive. Han Li was unable to shake it off despite his best efforts.

The transmission of the words of light was just too fast; in an instant, all of the words of light had crawled all over Han Li. Glistening words of light covered Han Li's body from head to toe, appearing incomparably strange.

Han Li was helpless and scared witless!

Suddenly, the words of light appeared to have received a command and flocked toward his head. The countless words seeped into his brain in an instant, but because of the sudden rush, Han Li immediately held his head while screaming in pain.

If the current circumstances continued for even a bit longer, Han Li's brain would most likely violently burst. Fortunately, the pain only lasted a short moment before the words of light all finished entering his head. Han Li then weakly fell to the ground and was unable to move in the slightest.

After no less than the quarter of an hour, Han Li regained some of his spirit and was finally barely able to stand. Although the pain inside his head had greatly alleviated, buzzing still lingered, and his nerves were stretched thin.

Han Li hurriedly climbed into the stone bed, closed his eyes, and regulated his breathing, allowing his mind to completely relax.

Han Li meditated like that for three days and three nights. Not only did all feeling of discomfort disappear from his head, but he also figured out the reason behind the overflow of words of light.

“Azure Essence Sword Art”! Furthermore, it was the complete magic art, all thirteen layers without any gaps or lost sections. It could even be cultivated all the way until the legendary Deity Transformation stage without question. These were the main details that were brought forth from the words of light.

Just as Han Li started to receive this information, he was faintly shocked but his face didn't show a shred of happiness.

This was because of the supplementary cultivation technique at the very end, the "Three Essence Revolutions Technique". At first, this piqued Han Li's interest, so he looked through it as he wished.

After browsing the first few passages, he blankly stared for a moment. He believed that he had misunderstood, but after he read through that part several more times, he was convinced that he was not mistaken, causing Han Li to enter a state of raging ecstasy.

This "Three Essence Revolutions Technique" actually possessed the miraculous, heaven-shaking effect of evading the Core Formation stage bottleneck! This information seemed like a voice from the Heavens, causing Han Li to believe that it was a dream.

Ever since he entered the world of cultivation, nearly every cultivator had talked about the problems of Core Formation. Everyone had sighed and shook their heads! All have said that breaking through to Core Formation was basically reliant on one's luck. It was a matter completely decided by the Heavens! Naturally, those with excellent aptitude had already cultivated to the peak of Foundation Establishment and possessed the qualifications for Core Formation. In addition, those possessing heavenly spiritual roots naturally did not have any problems in this area.

To be blunt, Han Li's confidence in achieving Core Formation was almost nil! With great difficulty, he spent all his life trying to find a way, so at this point, he was truly reluctant to give up! Thus,

even as nonexistent as his chances were, his thirst for Core Formation and his will to fight for it only grew stronger!

But now, a straight path to Core Formation appeared before him, allowing him to bypass the bottleneck. How could Han Li not be in ecstasy?

But regardless of Han Li's excitement, this cultivation art couldn't be considered a shortcut. In fact, it was completely unverified.

The expert who created this cultivation technique and the Azure Essence Sword Art had long since reached Core Formation when he created these techniques, which he based on an insane idea about Core Formation! He stated at the very end of the cultivation technique that even if one completely followed the cultivation technique and fulfilled all that was required, the odds of immediate formation of a core was only one half!

However, this was enough for Han Li! Even if one were to say only one in ten instead of one in two odds, it would be enough for Han Li to pursue it without hesitation.

But after Han Li's moment of ecstasy, he carefully analyzed the cultivation technique, and what he found decimated his hopes. Even if Han Li were a person with strong aspirations, he could not help but appear to have taken a direct blow, his face increasingly pale.

Those cultivating the Three Essence Revolutions Technique

obviously needed to first cultivate the Azure Essence Sword Art since this technique was originally founded on its basis. Although the Azure Essence Sword Art was extraordinarily difficult to practice, that was not the most important point. What caused Han Li's face to become unsightly was due to the meaning behind the technique's name. The individual must first cultivate to the sixth layer of the Azure Essence Sword Art then disperse their sword art cultivation, after which they must cultivate all over again.

According to its founder, only like this would someone be able to use the "Three Essence Revolutions Technique". By repeating cultivating his magic power, his true essence would be able to further compress and have his magic power become several times more pure. After doing this three times in succession and cultivating back to the peak of Foundation Establishment, he would be able to form a core in his Dantian with ease.

According to this expert's conjectures, a Gold Core was originally created by solidifying one's true essence and condensing it. If the true essence was already solidified, forming a core would naturally be effortless!

Even if Han Li felt that what this expert said was reasonable, he was truly hesitant to foolishly disperse his own cultivation.

This wasn't because Han Li was scared of the hardship of regaining his lost cultivation but rather because he wasn't confident that he would be able to cultivate three times within his lifespan.

Even if he had the assistance of the small mysterious bottle, this

was a matter of extreme risk! After all, according to the expert's plan, it would take longer and longer to cultivate as he would need to condense and compress his true essence more each time.

The great benefits of doing this were, without a doubt, extremely great. It would allow him to have true essence and magic power several times greater than that of common cultivators, but at the same time, he would certainly be required to spend more time than common cultivators.

With a trifling two hundred years of life, would he be able to do all of this? Han Li truly did not know!

After a moment of indecision, Han Li looked toward the golden page that he received from Li Huayuan. Only after an inspection of what it contained would he be able to come to a decision.

As a result, an equivalent sword stream entered the gold page and was rewarded with an equivalent headache. Han Li experienced it once more, accepting the contents of the other gold page.

“Azure Bamboo Bee Cloud Sword” This was what entered in Han Li's mind.

Han Li became extremely interested and patiently arranged the words of light before pouring through it.

It turned out that inside the gold page were actually instructions for how to refine a Core Formation flying sword magic treasure

called “Azure Bamboo Bee Cloud Sword”. This wood attribute flying sword was actually quite similar to Han Li’s “Gold Beetle Swarm Blades” as it was refined as a set of magic treasures.

At least twelve wood attribute flying swords were required to form a set. It was quite strange. Naturally, if he were able to collect enough materials and had enough true essence, he could theoretically refine thirty-six or even seventy-two as a set.

Chapter 242: Making Talismans

Han Li carefully put away for the two golden book pages and planned his future actions meticulously.

Since he wanted to cultivate the Three Essence Revolutions Technique, the small mysterious bottle's green liquid must be used to its full extent. Thus, he quickly gathered together the materials for the two ancient formulas. If it could be bought, it was bought; he let nothing slip away.

With this said, apart from spiritual power, the green liquid also had other components, but they still remained a complete mystery to him. There was no way that Spiritual Qi by itself was able to miraculously mature plants.

After entering Yellow Maple Valley, he had researched it several times. regardless of how diluted the spiritual liquid was, with just a tiny drop of green liquid mixed with water, all the animals that tasted it had similarly exploded. It wasn't a matter of how diluted the green liquid was but rather its unknown components running rampant.

After receiving several similar results, Han Li was forced to begrudgingly give up.

But using the mysterious small bottle to simply refine pills was a bit narrow! Han Li felt that using its wondrous effects to mature plants had many more uses; to use it just for pills seemed wasteful.

After a moment of consideration, Han Li felt that with Foundation Establishment battles, apart from magic tools and cultivation techniques, mid-grade or higher talismans were an absolute necessity. However, these mid-grade talismans were extremely expensive! A single talisman often cost several tens of spirit stones. Han Li could only shake his head repeatedly!

A good number of these mid or higher grade Five Elements talismans had truly great power. They could take the place of incisive Daoist magics, capable of saving one's life.

If a magic technique's grade was too high, then even if a Foundation Establishment cultivator were to use it, it would require no small amount of magic power and time. As such, purchasing a few of these talismans was essential as a life-preserving last resort.

Thus, Han Li decided to create talismans, actual mid-grade talismans.

Because creating talismans required blank talisman paper refined from spirit herbs of a certain maturity, Han Li wanted to bring out the bottle and make full use of its wondrous effects.

Naturally, high-grade talismans couldn't be made with this method. Those required spirit hides of a few particular demonic beasts, and Han Li was currently not capable of acquiring such hides.

As for the cinnabar used to create talismans, there was no need to

be picky since most of the supply was refined from the blood of a few spirit beast species, the majority being extracted from domesticated spirit beasts. It fundamentally wasn't worth much.

One had to be somewhat selective with the talisman brushes used to make talismans. However, Han Li already had the Golden Sincerity Brush, which should suit his needs.

When Han Li thought of the Golden Sincerity Brush, he naturally thought of that young, easily embarrassed Han Yunzhi and couldn't help but slightly smile. At this moment, she was probably at Spirit Beast Mountain!

But in the blink of an eye, Han Li regained his focus and once again pondered about the feasibility and risks of creating talismans.

He had the tools and an unending supply of materials. The fundamental problem of a talisman creation expert, having enough materials, was no problem for him. Currently, the only restriction he had was his cultivation of mid-grade and higher Daoist magics.

Talisman creation experts must first be able to use a magic technique before refining it onto a talisman. Otherwise, there would be nothing to inscribe onto the talisman paper. After all, talismans were only a method of sealing a magic technique in advance.

When he thought of having to cultivate mid-grade magic techniques, Han Li felt a pounding headache!

He didn't know whether it had to do with his spiritual roots, but when he practiced Daoist magics of the Five Elements, he felt that his talent was extremely lacking. Even after spending several times more effort and time than other cultivators, he wouldn't make the slightest of gains and remained completely ignorant of the magic's essence!

However, after he entered Foundation Establishment, he was able to easily learn those few elementary magic techniques. Furthermore, he was proficient enough to perform most of them in the blink of an eye. But for mid-grade magic techniques, it was the same as before. He could only look up to the sky and sigh!

Han Li knew that if he arduously cultivated a few mid-grade magic techniques, he would most likely be able to seal and imprint a few talismans. He had no extravagant hopes of being able to refine all of the mid-grade magic techniques he wished.

With a great amount of mid-grade talismans, not only would he have a great advantage in battle, but he could also sell them openly without arousing the suspicion of others.

Thus, Han Li was freed from the plight of lacking spiritual stones. He currently didn't dare to conspicuously take out spiritual herbs to trade for spirit stones!

Furthermore, Han Li had further thoughts. If his cultivation truly scattered and he had to cultivate back what he lost, during that time, he would unquestionably be at his weakest. If an enemy

or someone with a grudge found him, how wouldn't he be in great danger!? After all, the world of cultivation wasn't some peaceful world; anything could happen.

But if he had a lot of talismans on hand, he would be able to preserve a certain amount of strength. Even if he couldn't subdue an enemy with the assistance of talismans, he could most likely escape with them.

Although learning how to create talismans would surely interfere with the advancement of his magic power, regardless of how he saw it, it would only take up some of his time. The gains were greater than the losses!

After Han Li tossed and turned several times in his chambers, he decided to simultaneously cultivate the Azure Essence Sword Art and practice talisman creation. Having made his decision after much deliberation, Han Li immediately set into motion.

During the next few days, he made two trips to his own sect's market city as well as the Heavenly Star Sect's market city to look for seeds and sprouts of spiritual herbs used in talisman paper refinement.

The materials written in the ancient pill formulas were naturally extremely rare and priceless materials. Fortunately, Han Li didn't have any problems with the maturity of these medicinal herbs and was fortunate enough to gather enough materials for the "Qi Refining Powder", causing him to be overjoyed.

As for the materials for the talisman paper, because he was starting with low grade-talismans, they were easily required. Of course, a large amount of cinnabar was indispensable.

After three or four days, Han Li created an opening in his great formation outside his Immortal's cave and entered it, closing it behind him. Then he entered secluded cultivation for his first time after reaching Foundation Establishment.

.....

Time does not stop for cultivation. Four years passed in the blink of an eye. Underneath the concealment of the formation spell, the cave's entrance had been tightly closed since that day and hadn't been opened since.

Then one day, a blue streak of light suddenly flew from the distant horizon. After it circled several times around the great formation, it turned into a chuckling Confucian Scholar holding a blue wooden board in his hand.

“So this is young Junior Martial Brother's Immortal's cave! Why did you pick such a remote place? Furthermore, the Spiritual Qi also isn't very abundant. If Martial Senior Lei hadn't given me a few directions, it would have truly been hard to find!” The Confucian Scholar muttered to himself with an expression of surprise.

Soon after, the Confucian Scholar sized up the great formation outside the Immortal's cave, suddenly displaying a desire to test it

out.

“Martial Senior Lei said this young Junior Martial Brother’s great defensive formation was incomparably ferocious and that if a Core Formation Cultivator were to come, they wouldn’t necessarily be able to break through. This must truly be false. How could it possibly be so ferocious? Should I give it a try?”

But after a bit of consideration, the Confucian Scholar dejectedly hung his head and said to himself, “Forget about it. This will interfere with Master’s plans!”

With that said, he took out a sound transmission talisman and looked at Han Li’s great formation. The sound transmission talisman suddenly turned into a streak of fiery light and silently entered the formation.

Then the Confucian Scholar immediately threw the wooden board in his hand into the air and left, flying away on his flying magic tool.

At this moment, in the secluded room with the spirit well spring, Han Li was meditating with his eyes closed.

His appearance was actually exactly the same as four years ago, without the slightest of change. However, his body was enveloped in a layer of faint azure light that continuously flickered, appearing as if it were an exceptionally beautiful illusion.

But if someone were to look at around, they would be beyond speechless. That was because there were talismans of all grades scattered around Han Li, from the elementary low-grade “Fireball” and “Ice Arrow” techniques to the elementary high-grade techniques “Earth Wall” and “Fire Cloud” and more. It seemed as if this were a large storehouse for talismans. In addition, there were a few empty boxes of cinnabar as well as stacks of blank talisman paper scattered about, appearing extremely messy.

Not knowing how much time had passed, Han Li wrinkled his brow in response to something and opened his eyes.

After a moment of thought, he suddenly stood and walked out of the seclusion chamber. As soon as he stood, all of the talismans and other items on the floor silently entered his storage pouch. His room instantly became spotless.

As he walked out of the seclusion chamber, Han Li waved his hand, and a small yellow flag appeared in it. Then he threw it out, turning the small flag into a streak of yellow light that flew outwards.

Before Han Li could finish walking to his bedroom, the small flag that had turned into a yellow light returned with a streak of fiery light in tow.

When Han Li saw this, he calmly moved his hand and summoned the small flag into it. He opened his other hand and shot out azure light toward the fiery light before him.

Chapter 243: Medicinal Efficacy

Han Li flicked his finger, and the streak of azure light flew into the flame; with a “bang”, the flames shot up a few feet, and Li Huayuan’s voice suddenly came out of it clearly.

“Immediately come to Green Ripple Cave! Your master has something to talk to you about!”

After these words, that streak of flame light immediately exploded into a shower of sparks that filled the sky, dissipating without a trace.

After Han Li heard the message, he rubbed his nose and entered his own room, his expression calm.

Upon entering his room, Han Li pulled out a small wooden trunk from underneath the stone bed; the trunk contained ten or so different styles of storage pouches. Han Li pulled out the one that he was currently carrying, then dumped out the large pile that had been stored inside the trunk. Then, he divided them individually by type and quality, placing them into different locations.

Next, Han Li shoved the trunk back into its original place, hesitated for a brief moment, then headed directly for the main entrance to the cave.

.....

Standing on the Divine Wind Boat, Han Li began to recall the circumstances of his cultivation and talisman manufacturing during these past four years, his expression somewhat heavy.

When Han Li sealed his cave, he had set up a small, very well-hidden medicinal garden in his cave. Although it wasn't large, it was enough for him to nurture his medicinal herbs while cultivating. The benefits of doing it this way were that when he was behind closed doors, he wouldn't have to worry about the medicinal herbs he was ripening being discovered; there would be no need for him to leave his cave, and he could be completely self-sufficient.

For this, he had purposefully opened countless small hidden holes in the rock wall near the medicinal garden to allow sunlight to enter, which the little bottle could use to absorb Spiritual Qi. Of course, the locations of these small holes were all definitely in the effective range of the great formation, so he didn't need to be concerned about others finding it.

As for the large medicinal garden outside, Han Li naturally planned to use it as a protective decoy!

With the small medicinal garden, Han Li could assuredly ripen his spiritual medicines while refining medicinal pills using Innate True Fire. Although True Fire was somewhat worse than Earth Fire, it was superior in its stability and safety; in addition, Han Li wouldn't have to worry about the number of times that he failed to refine them!

The medicinal pills refined from the ancient recipes were, as

expected, no small matter.

After Han Li had refined the Qi Refining Powder and consumed it, he experienced afresh the kind of explosion of Spiritual Qi that he had felt when establishing his Foundation, causing him to immediately sit down in shock and begin to refine it, not daring to have the slightest amount of neglect.

This shocking outcome naturally caused his magic power within the first year of closed-door cultivation to vigorously shoot up, far outstripping any of his expectations.

Extravagantly ingesting medicine saved Han Li the time he would have spent on absorbing Spiritual Qi and allowed him to throw himself directly into refining it into magic power. His efficiency in increasing his magic power naturally multiplied many times.

This caused Han Li to be unable to contain his joy! Recultivating the Azure Essence Sword Art three times suddenly became a very realizable prospect!

Although the Azure Essence Sword Art truly did strangely cause a portion of one's magic power to dissipate every few days just like how he had been told, with one pouch of Qi Refining Powder every six or seven days, this defect could be completely overlooked.

During this time, Han Li also ingested a Foundation Establishment Pill out of curiosity; in the end, its effect was minimal, so Han Li completely gave up on this train of thought.

However, in the latter three years, a matter that greatly surprised Han Li occurred.

Starting from the second year, the surge of Spiritual Qi when ingesting the Qi Refining Powder gradually decreased year after year until the fourth year, when the same thing that had happened to the Yellow Dragon Pellet and the Golden Essence Pill back then happened once again. The Qi Refining Powder lost all of its effectiveness! No matter how many pouches Han Li ingested, he could not feel any Spiritual Qi.

Han Li's head hurt, and he also began to feel greatly distressed!

That was because this was definitely not because the Qi Refining Powder was insufficient to keep up with his rate of growth. Based on this Qi Refining Powder's medicinal properties, using it all the way to the late stages of Foundation Establishment should not have posed any problems; after all, it was a pill based on the ancient formula! Even for Core Formation cultivators it might be quite useful.

The circumstances were completely different than with the Yellow Dragon Pellet and Golden Essence Pill; those pills couldn't keep up with his cultivation layers, and he had anticipated their failures a long time ago.

After musing over it hundreds of times, Han Li used the medical arts that he had learned before to draw a conclusion: perhaps he had used the overly powerful Qi Refining Powder too frequently, finally causing his body to generate a natural resistance to its medicinal properties. Thus, this kind of medicinal pill gradually

lost its efficacy for him.

Han Li was unable to determine the veracity of this conclusion. After all, in the cultivation world, no one else was able to extravagantly consume medicinal pills every few days! Naturally, he had no precedent to compare to, nor could he borrow someone else's experiences.

However, Han Li still hoped that if he stopped using this medicinal pill for a certain period of time, the Qi Refining Powder would regain its effectiveness.

Holding onto this kind of thinking, Han Li stopped using medicinal pills in the remaining year, switching over to conventional methods to cultivate the Azure Essence Sword Art.

However, having become accustomed to the speed of magic power increase when taking spiritual medicines, it was very difficult for him to endure the slow speeds of obediently cultivating using conventional methods. Even more so, using this method to cultivate, based on his natural talent, it would be a miracle if he could cultivate it once in his lifetime, let alone three times!

After enduring a year of cultivating at the speed of a turtle, the results still brought Han Li great disappointment. Upon ingesting the Qi Refining Powder again, it still had no effect. It seemed as if this medicinal pill had completely lost its effectiveness; he could only search for other spiritual medicines.

As a result, even if Li Huayuan had not used a sound transmission talisman to call him, Han Li had already decided to take a trip outside his cave.

After all, he still possessed another ancient recipe for which he had not yet prepared raw ingredients for; only by refining this kind of spiritual pill could his magic power vigorously shoot up again. In addition, he planned on searching for a few more pill recipes; if the Spirit Gathering Pill also lost its effectiveness like the Qi Refining Powder, Han Li could only resort to taking another kind of pill every few years.

As for refining talismans, the process went extremely smoothly.

Every day, he would set aside the first half of a day, starting by practicing low-grade magic techniques that he could already perform, not treasuring the raw materials and crazily refining talismans nonstop. This kind of wasteful method, which other talisman-refinement masters could not even conceive of, caused Han Li's skill in talisman-refinement to rise continuously. Now, he could just barely refine elementary high-grade talismans, even though his success rates were still pitifully low!

He had already decided that the next time he cultivated behind closed doors, he would begin to practice refining mid-tier magic spells and attempt to refine mid-grade talismans; these were his primary goals for talisman-refinement.

In addition, while he was behind closed doors, Han Li also refined seven or eight Color Fixing Pills in his free time apart from Qi Refining Pills and ingested one out of curiosity. If it could truly

preserve his appearance, Han Li naturally would feel extremely happy; after all, nobody would wish for the day when one becomes white-haired, even if cultivators' fleshly bodies aged at an extremely slow pace.

At this time, because his pill had lost its effectiveness, Han Li was incredibly depressed in flight; however, he was still somewhat curious about why his master Li Huayuan would suddenly want to see him. He couldn't help but guess reasons as to why after four years he would take the initiative to seek him out.

In this way, Han Li arrived at the Green Ripple Cave, his mind preoccupied with many things. Only after sending a voice transmission did he realize that the one who opened the restrictions for him was no longer that Eldest Brother Yu, but rather a twenty year-old handsome male with red lips and white teeth.

Before Han Li was even able to open his mouth, this youth first said to him indifferently:

“It's Junior Brother Han, right? I am Zi Wuxuan, Master's sixth disciple. Master wanted me to wait here for you for a while; come with me!”

After Zi Wuxuan said this, he didn't even glance at Han Li once and turned around, then left. This caused Han Li to rub his face, baffled.

“My face isn't that unpleasant, is it?!”

Han Li could only somewhat helplessly and unhappily follow closely after him. Naturally, there were no words spoken between them, and they directly arrived at the guest lobby just like that. Three people were sitting on the chairs in the lobby, and two people stood beside them.

The people sitting were Li Huayuan, his wife, and a red-clad woman around thirty years old. Although her appearance was decent and she still possessed some charm, her face was icy cold, faintly revealing a killing intent rarely possessed by cultivators.

At this time, Li Huayuan was seemingly saying something to the woman; based on his expression and words, he seemed to respect this woman very much.

As for the two people standing to the side, one was the Fourth Senior Martial Brother Song Meng that he had met before; the other was an eighteen or nineteen year-old young woman, who was also fully clothed in red. Her face could be considered pretty, but she wore a flirty expression, and it seemed from her appearance that she was very closely related to the red-clothed woman.

“Han Li, come over and meet your Martial Senior Hong Fu!”

Li Huayuan, upon seeing Han Li walk in, immediately called him over with a happy tone. That Wuxuan silently walked over to Song Meng’s side, standing with his hands clasped together.

“Martial Senior Hong Fu!” Although Han Li didn’t know what was going on, he naturally would not lack respect when it was necessary.

The red-clothed woman, upon hearing Han Li’s greeting, did not immediately indicate anything; instead, she closely inspected Han Li from head to toe.

After a long while, her face finally revealed a trace of a slight smile, and she said with a somewhat harsh voice:

“En, very good!”

“Hehe! It seems like Martial Senior Hong Fu is very satisfied! Although this disciple of mine only has an average appearance, he is genuinely a Foundation Establishment cultivator; he’s also very lovable and clever, having won my heart!” Seeing the red-clothed woman’s satisfied expression, Li Huayuan instantly broke out into a smile and began to heap praises upon Han Li.

Han Li felt as if he had been drenched in cold water, not knowing the reason why!

Chapter 244: Pair Cultivation

“Satisfied...what does he meaning, satisfied?”

When Han Li heard this, he did not know why he felt uneasy. All he knew was that when he heard Li Huayuan incessantly praise him again, he had an even worse premonition!

Furthermore, he already discovered that ever since he entered the room, that young woman had shot several stealthy glances at him with an expression of complete discontent. In addition, when this Martial Senior Hong Fu said that he was very good, his figure slightly shook and he hastily lowered his head.

Meanwhile, a gaze filled with hostility swept toward Han Li, frightening him for a moment. He couldn't help but return the gaze. It was actually Seventh Senior Martial Brother Wuxuan who had previously introduced him.

When Wuxuan saw Han Li respond to his gaze, his face contorted with surprise. He immediately shifted his gaze with a guilty appearance.

When Han Li saw this, he was filled with suspicion! However, his expression maintained his usual patient and calm expression. Seeing him instinctively maintain his calm, the red-clothed woman inwardly continued to nod her head!

“It will be this child. I feel like he is very suitable. I will first return with Xuan Er and will calmly wait for good news from

Martial Disciple!” the red-clothed woman suddenly said as she nodded her head.

“Martial Ancestor, be at ease. I will surely make the proper arrangements.”

Li Huayuan saw that the woman wanted to leave, so he hastily consented and saw them both out. As Han Li regained his senses, Martial Senior Hong Fu had already left with that young woman.

When Li Huayuan and his wife brought Han Li and the others to the main hall, they were beaming with happiness, both smiling without saying a word.

The two returned to their seats and sized up Han Li without end. It was unknown what intention they had.

“Han Li, as your Master, I must first congratulate you!” Li Huayuan happily looked at Han Li for a moment before suddenly saying such senseless words. This caused Han Li’s heart to beat harder and be even more uneasy.

“Disciple truly doesn’t know what to be happy about. Master, please enlighten me!” Han Li respectfully said with a dark foreboding dwelling in his heart.

“Xixi! This is an extraordinary matter. When your Martial Senior Hong Fu saw you, she was interested in having you and that disciple of hers to form a bond as pair cultivation companions!”

The young woman did not wait for Li Huayuan to reply and was the first to unravel the riddle, causing Han Li to become dumbstruck.

“Become pair cultivation companions?” Han Li muttered and became despondent. This was far too surprising!

“What is this? This is a fine thing that others dream of having but can’t obtain! You should know that female cultivation disciples are originally few in number. Those capable of cultivating to Foundation Establishment are pathetically fewer. Also, pair cultivation a mutually beneficial method to enormously advance the cultivation of both sides. Others will not be able to find such a boon even with a lantern!” Li Huayuan said with a happy expression.

With what he said, to be able to form a relationship with Martial Ancestor Hong Fu who possessed profound magic power was greatly advantageous. Who didn’t know that this female Immortal Hong Fu stood near the top of ratings in the State of Yue for Core Formation Cultivators! In Yellow Maple Valley, her magic power was only second to the great ancestor.

After thinking about the benefits of forming a close relationship between disciples, Li Huayuan had a dignified, old-fashioned bearing and chuckled continuously.

“This disciple had never thought of pair cultivation before. This is truly unexpected! Moreover, there are so many male cultivators with appearances and aptitudes far greater than this disciple; how could she come to find me?” With his wits returned, Han Li could

only bravely reply to his question. However, this caused him to remain greatly perplexed.

“Hehe! This is disciple’s good luck! Your Martial Ancestor Hong Fu previously had an emotional wound when she was young and came to completely loathe frivolous, handsome men. Thus, she came to select a companion for her disciple. Naturally, males she finds unpleasant to the eye were beneath her consideration. As such, finding a disciple with a similar age and looks that do not disgust her could not be found with the several hundreds of Foundation Establishment disciples inside Yellow Maple Valley. Your Martial Senior Hong Fu has visited several Immortal’s caves similar to your master’s, and you were the first one she saw that she was completely satisfied with,” Li Huayuan said with satisfaction.

“As for aptitude, your Martial Senior isn’t particularly picky. The disciple of your Martial Senior, that young woman who stood at her side today, although her aptitude isn’t nearly as ridiculous as your own, she is also mediocre and isn’t exceptional in any way. I heard that she had to take three Foundation Establishment Pills and many precious medicines in order to barely reach Foundation Establishment. If it weren’t for the fact that she was a close descendant of your Martial Ancestor, there absolutely wouldn’t be much reason to spend such a large amount attention on that girl, but because of their relationship, the girl received much favor!” Li Huayuan explained to Han Li.

He then nodded for a moment and sighed, continuing, “Actually in the start, I hadn’t thought to recommend you but instead call forth your Seventh Senior Martial Brother. After all, whether it’s appearance or aptitude, your Senior Martial Brother Wuxuan

exceeds you by no small amount! Although I knew that your Martial Senior Hong Fu has some prejudice against handsome men, I held a slight hope to try for a fluke. You should know what resulted. Your Senior Martial Brother Wu was unable to pass by your Martial Senior and was denied, though I did see that Dong girl greatly approve.”

After Li Huayuan said this, he looked at Wuxuan, causing his face to become very red and be at a complete loss.

Han Li suddenly realized why his Senior Martial Brother was hostile and cold towards him; it was because he had been eliminated as a candidate. It seemed he and the young woman had taken a liking to each other! However, Li Huayuan words “Dong girl” caused Han Li to recall of the matter of “Senior Martial Brother Lu” whom he had previously killed.

(TL: The Dong girl and Martial Senior Hong Fu were first mentioned in Chapter 166 by Senior Martial Brother Wu, who wanted to rape Junior Martial Sister Chen)

On the night of “Senior Martial Brother Lu” brutal display, he seemed to have mentioned the name of that Dong girl and Martial Ancestor Hong Fu. Could it be that this girl had been on good terms with that wretched ingrate?

With that thought, Han Li felt uncomfortable from head to toe. His impression of Martial Senior Hong Fu’s disciple immediately dropped down without the slightest good opinion towards her. After he heard Li Huayuan’s analysis, he felt that he had to thoroughly extinguishing this matter.

In truth, Han Li wasn't particularly opposed to pair cultivation, let alone if the other party was a disciple of a Core Formation cultivator. Becoming a Dao companion with such a figure would bring endless benefits. He didn't immediately agree with apprehension as the secrets he held were too many. He truly couldn't allow for anyone to stick close to him.

As of current, Han Li couldn't agree to such an absurd matter. He had no interest in picking up a girlfriend! Furthermore, that Dong girl should have a favorable impression toward young confident and handsome men. She simply wouldn't fancy him.

With this thought, Han Li hesitated for a moment and said somewhat unnaturally, "Disciple feels that this is somewhat inappropriate. On one hand, this is somewhat too unexpected. Disciple hadn't prepared himself in the slightest! On the other hand, Disciple saw that Martial Senior Hong Fu's disciple wasn't satisfied toward this disciple. Although Senior Hong Fu may be strongly pressuring her, creating a good chance for Disciple, in the end a strongly wrung melon isn't sweet! Master, please look for another disciple and give him a try. Perhaps there would be a more appropriate candidate than this disciple!"

When those words left Han Li's mouth, the intent of rejection in those words was undoubtable, slightly surprising Li Huayuan and his wife.

The young woman seemed to have thought of something but didn't speak. His master wrinkled his brow and seemed somewhat irritated.

“You hear this out. Your master has already patted his chest, agreeing to this matter with your Martial Senior Hong Fu. How could I go back on it? Even if there were more appropriate candidates, your master would not go back on his word. As for your worries that the girl isn’t willing, that is a matter not worth fussing about! Of us cultivators, how many Dao companions are there that immediately have affinity for one another? Even if they spent a long time with each other, they naturally wouldn’t all be completely harmonious!” Li Huayuan had a somewhat strict tone. His words faintly carried a trace of rebuke.

When Han Li heard this, he inwardly complained without end, but when he immediately searched for an excuse, he was unable to find one! But at this moment, the young woman suddenly said a few words that startled Li Huayuan, finally breaking the siege on Han Li.

“Han Li, you and that Dong girl entered the sect around the same time, and your time to enter Foundation Establishment wasn’t too far from her’s as well. During this time, have you heard the rumors flowing around?”

“Rumors?” The young woman’s words stunned Li Huayuan. He couldn’t help but ask this with surprise. When he saw Han Li’s silent tacit agreement, he felt even more surprised.

“This was something that several close friends and I chatted about a few times. I heard a few bits of rumors, but they most certainly couldn’t be true!” The young woman faintly bit her lips, as if she were embarrassed to have said this.

“You two, leave for a bit. Han Li by himself will be enough!” When Li Huayuan saw his wife act as such, he muttered to himself for a moment. Then he waved his hand, gesturing for Song Meng and Wuxuan to leave the guest room. Han Li was now the only disciple inside.

Song Meng was indifferent. When he heard the order, he saluted and asked to be excused. Although that Wuxuan didn't dare to disobey his master and closely followed behind Song Meng, there was a trace of unwillingness on his face. He looked at Han Li with a rather peculiar gaze. After Han Li noticed this, he sunk into deep thought.

Chapter 245: A Long Journey And Mishaps

“Now there are no outsiders here anymore; why doesn’t Madame speak the truth! That way, I can determine what appropriate action to take, lest there be anything that I didn’t consider appropriately,” Li Huayuan said, his expression respectful.

When the young wife heard this, she glanced at Han Li, who was scratching his head and smiling bitterly, then finally opened her mouth and said:

“In the past two years, I unintentionally heard a few pieces of information concerning this matter, but whether they’re true or not, I don’t know. From hearsay, this Martial Senior Hong Fu’s female disciple is not restrained at all in the matters between males and females; when she was in the Qi Condensation stage, she had unclear relationships with numerous males. People have even privately fought for her, almost leading to disciples from the same sect killing each other. In the end, Martial Senior Hong Fu flew into a rage when she found out, grounding her to the confines of her cave and increasing supervision until she established her Foundation, at which point she was released again. But not too long after, word spread that she had gotten into a relationship with the young master of the Feng Family and seemingly intended to cultivate as a pair with him. However, Martial Senior Hong Fu hates people from the Feng Family the most, so she naturally would not agree to this matter and locked her up again. In the past two years, no such news has spread. Because there was no solid evidence to support these claims, I never paid any attention to them. Thus, when Martial Senior Hong Fu took her disciple along to visit, I didn’t think about this matter. Now, seeing Han Li’s extremely unhappy appearance, I felt that it was somewhat strange and suddenly remembered the rumors.”

The young woman's somewhat apologetic remarks caused both Han Li and Li Huayuan to become slightly dazed upon hearing them.

Li Huayuan had never expected that the young woman surnamed Dong would actually have such a sloppy reputation, yet he had so hastily agreed to Martial Senior Hong Fu's requests; how could this be a good thing! Likewise, Han Li naturally did not expect that this young woman not only had an unclear relationship with Senior Martial Brother Lu, but she actually had such a long string of lovers that! Even Han Li did not know how extensive it was. This rendered him to speechless once again.

"Wife, are you speaking the truth? Is Martial Senior Hong Fu's disciple's reputation really so poor?" Li Huayuan asked in disbelief. He could restrain himself no longer and stood up, then began to pace anxiously around the room continuously.

This was no longer simply a question of whether or not Han Li was willing to pair cultivate anymore. If he really allowed his own disciple to accept such a woman, his own reputation would definitely not improve.

"I don't know. Because this matter was somewhat carelessly mentioned by someone else, perhaps even the person who told me this doesn't know whether it's true or not!" The young woman sighed helplessly.

Upon hearing these words, Han Li rolled his eyes and cried out

loudly in his heart: “What do you mean, you don’t know if it’s real or not? At least this little girl definitely had an unclear relationship with ‘Senior Martial Brother Lu’, otherwise how could he so easily try to kill his former female companion?”

Of course, Han Li wouldn’t say these words out loud; instead, he stood awkwardly in the same spot, acting as if he were saying “as long as you know about this matter, I’ll be okay, Madame”. This caused Li Huayuan to immediately feel a headache coming on upon seeing him.

Now that he knew about what had happened, Li Huayuan naturally would not force Han Li to agree to this matter; even he had intentions of reneging. However, this Martial Senior Hong Fu was not a person to carelessly slander. In addition, his reason for reneging was not appropriate to talk about plainly. How could he not feel incredibly vexed?

After Li Huayuan paced around the room a number of times, he still couldn’t think of any strategies. After his eyes slanted, he discovered that Han Li was still standing to the side, eagerly awaiting for his reply as his master; he couldn’t help but feel even more dispirited in his heart and said with no happiness:

“You can return first; when your master’s wife and I have discussed this matter, we will let you know how we are going to deal with this matter, alright?”

Anxiously standing to the side, Han Li was also worried that the other person wouldn’t care about the facts of the situation, forcing him to agree to this matter of pair cultivation. But now, upon

hearing Li Huayuan's instructions, his heart relaxed, knowing that this matter would most likely not go through.

Thus, he agreed extremely happily and slipped out.

Then, Han Li hurriedly flew away from the cave under the watchful gazes of Song Meng and Wuxuan, who were standing guard outside the large lobby.

Han Li finally received Li Huayuan's voice transmission talisman after three uneasy days. In the end, upon hearing the results of the negotiations between his master and Martial Senior Hong Fu, Han Li couldn't help but look up at the sky and let out a huge sigh!

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Half a month later, in front of Green Ripple Cave's waterfall, Li Huayuan and his wife, as well as Female Immortal Hong Fu, were all there to send two people off. These two people were about to undertake a long journey but wore somewhat stiff expressions, only submissively answering incessantly. They did not possess any of the excitement that people who were about to take a long journey would normally have.

This male and female pair was Han Li and Female Immortal Hong Fu's disciple Dong Xuan'er.

"Han Li, on this trip you two must be careful and help each other out! I heard that the cultivation world hasn't been so peaceful

lately, and cultivators will often disappear. At first, it was just Qi Condensation disciples, but recently even Foundation Establishment cultivators have been involved in accidents!” Although Li Huayuan had only exhorted Han Li simply with a few sentences before the two of them left, Han Li still felt quite moved in his heart.

However, Martial Senior Hong Fu’s words to the young woman were a big eye-opener to Han Li.

“During this entire trip, you have to listen to your Senior Martial Brother Han’s words and behave yourself. If anything happens this time, don’t blame me for not forgetting that you’re my disciple.” Martial Senior Hong Fu’s extremely blunt words caused the young woman’s face to turn deathly pale, and she repeatedly nodded her head, wearing an extremely pitiful appearance.

Han Li and Dong Xuan’er both flew into the air on their magic tools, then flew towards the south, disappearing along the horizon.

As Li Huayuan watched the dots of light from these two people slowly disappear, he suddenly and somewhat anxiously said to Female Immortal Hong Fu:

“Does Martial Senior really have the faith to allow those two people represent you and me at the Yan Family’s Treasure Seizing Assembly? You surely know that those two have only just established their Foundations not too long ago. They don’t even stand a chance!”

“What, does Martial Junior Li fear that not sending competent disciples will damage your reputation, or are you regretful about the “Yin Yang Tower” treasure talisman that the Yan Family is taking out this time?” Female Immortal Hong Fu rebuked, glancing sideways at Li Huayuan; this caused him to laugh bitterly.

“Of course my husband does not have this intention. But I wonder, why didn’t Martial Senior Hong Fu send out her strongest disciples? Han Li and young lady Dong, when compared to those true Foundation Establishment experts, definitely won’t withstand even a single blow. Does Martial Senior want to use this opportunity to pair the two together?” the young woman gently explained for Li Huayuan after gently laughing once.

“Junior Martial Brother Li, your wife really is a good wife! It’s not like I didn’t have this kind of intention. Of course it would be best if she could develop a relationship with your disciple along the way! However, this was not my original intention; my main purpose is still for Xuan’er to experience some setbacks during this trip to the Yan Family and kill off some of her arrogance. I heard that the Yan Family has a young woman with heavenly spiritual roots who will also be attending this Treasure Seizing Assembly. In this way, Xuan’er will be able to realize the difference between her and true geniuses instead of believing that she is extraordinary among female Foundation Establishment cultivators and not knowing how things really stand.”

“Because she was the only descendant of my deceased elder brother, I’ve pampered her too much! She actually dared to do such indecent things, creating such scandals by mixing with a few male disciples? She completely corrupted her clean reputation as a woman! If I hadn’t examined her body many times to ensure that

she had preserved her virginity, I would've exterminated her with one palm, lest others think that our Dong Clan produced such a dishonest woman."

The red-clothed woman said these things coldly, but at the very end it seemed as if her words were referring to something. This caused Li Huayuan and his wife to glance at each other, having understood the meaning in her words, their faces revealing awkward expressions!

One day, Li Huayuan and his wife had gathered up their courage to stammeringly bring up the matter of reneging on the arrangement with this Martial Senior Hong Fu. In the end—greatly outside of his expectations—this Martial Senior of his, whose temper was normally not too good, actually let out a soft sigh and agreed. This caused the two of them to become extremely happy!

However, Hong Fu still raised one condition, which was that Han Li would accompany Dong Xuan'er on a trip outside to attend the upcoming "Treasure Seizing Assembly" hosted by the Yan Family.

The State of Yue's number one clan, the Yan Family, had invited disciples of Core Formation experts from the few neighboring states to gather together in their "Treasure Seizing Assembly, most likely to improve relations with all the Core Formation cultivators and benefit the Yan Family's future expansion. They had even taken out the legendary "Yin Yang Tower" treasure talisman this time to serve as the number one prize; of course, there were also a substantial amount of other unique treasures, magic tools, and spiritual medicines.

Thus, many Core Formation cultivators who received the invitation all sent out their strongest disciples to attend this great assembly. After all, that “Yin Yang Tower” treasure talisman was something that even Core Formation cultivators greatly coveted!

Of course, because of distance constraints, the chance that Core Formation cultivators outside of the State of Yue would send people to participate was not too high. Instead, it was still cultivators from the state that made up the majority of the participants.

When Li Huayuan heard the other person’s conditions, he initially felt that to allow Han Li to participate with his weak cultivation base in this year’s great assembly was truly too big of a waste!

However, upon considering it once more, he realized that his two strongest disciples were out taking care of business and would not be able to rush to this year’s great assembly. If he were to send other disciples, they definitely wouldn’t stand a chance at taking first place. Even if they were to reach other rankings and received a few magic tools or the like, he looked upon them with disdain! Thus, he agreed.

Li Huayuan and his wife originally believed that this matter was over, and so they had wanted to say their goodbyes and then leave. But who know that Female Immortal Hong Fu suddenly wanted his wife to stay for a while, saying that there were a few matters that she wanted to discuss with her alone? Having said this, she only chased out Li Huayuan, who had a stomach full of doubt.

In the end, half a day later, the young master's wife, upon returning from Hong Fu's cave, told Li Huayuan something that left him dumbstruck.

Chapter 246: Dong Xuan'er

This Martial Ancestor Hong Fu brought the young woman to the back room and had her examine the flawless arm of the deeply blushing Dong Xuan'er. The [gecko cinnabar](#) on it revealed that her chastity was shown to actually be intact. This caused Han Li's Master's Wife to be greatly shocked!

(TL: Gecko cinnabar supposedly tells if you're a virgin.)

From the appearance of her flirtatious behavior, how could this Dong Xuan'er possibility not have had intercourse! On the day that the couple tried to renege on the matter of pair cultivation, they had pretended to not know of the rumors and remained ambiguous.

However, they completely didn't expect that the girl's reputation had long been common knowledge. This very matter was what drove the couple to renege on their agreement for the sake of their reputation.

While the young woman was astonished, Hong Fu explained to her. Because her disciple desired the wondrous effect of preserving her appearance, she had first cultivated the top-grade magic technique she had on hand, the "[Spring](#) Transformation Art", which altered the bearing of her appearance through cultivation. A few cultivators with women essence identification techniques had seen Dong Xuan'er and assumed she had already lost her virginity, giving birth to many unflattering rumors.

(TL: the Spring 春 in Spring Transformation Art can also mean joy, lust, and youth)

It was without a doubt that this disciple truly did not care much for her own reputation and actually had a rather familiar relationship with many male cultivators. However, because of the seductive effect of the Spring Transformation Arts along with her extraordinary status, to have no illicit affairs with any of the male cultivators who were circling around her was a truly remarkable and unexpected matter.

However, the male cultivators who stayed by her side grew more numerous as Dong Xuan'er gradually formed a habit of shooting flirty looks at young men, immediately planting the strange notion that she wanted them to get underneath her skirt. This even went far enough as to cause discord between a few men, all rivals for her affection!

Fortunately, as a prerequisite for Hong Fu allowing this girl to cultivating the Spring Transformation Art, she was not allowed to throw away her chastity. If she didn't find any trace of the gecko cinnabar, Master Hong Fu would have immediately dispersed her magic power and would have forced her to live on as a mortal. This was to prevent Dong Xuan'er, who had bewitchment techniques from cultivating the Spring Transformation Art, from ruining the principles of the Dong Clan.

Underneath very restrictive conditions, although Dong Xuan'er had often sent flirting glances at these young men, she hadn't dared to step too far out of line!

However, these small antics slowly reached Hong Fu's ears and caused this female Core Formation cultivator to become furious. She firmly punished Dong Xuan'er and immediately confined her

in a restrictive formation for a period of time.

But it was already too late, and Dong Xuan'er terrible reputation had already spread throughout Yellow Maple Valley. This rumor had quickly spread and was fundamentally impossible to stifle. Even the Core Formation cultivator Hong Fu was unable to do anything about this!

Currently, even if those cultivators who knew of her reputation found out that Dong Xuan'er had truly remained chaste, they wouldn't dare to become pair cultivation companions for the sake of preserving their own reputation.

However, she had reached a stage of cultivation for Spring Transformation where she was required to pair cultivate in order to progress her magic power, else it would regress.

As for those cultivators who still sought Dong Xuan'er, Hong Fu did not find any that satisfied her, finding faults in their moral character and lewd attempts. But eventually she made a trip to Li Huayuan's Immortal's cave and chose Han Li.

Having heard all of this, the young woman wore a very embarrassed expression and returned to Li Huayuan's side. After she told her husband, they both remained silent for a good amount of time.

Although the couple had truly mistaken Dong Xuan'er's purity, it was as Hong Fu had said. Even if she had remained truly chaste, her reputation was truly spoiled, preventing Li Huayuan from

willingly allowing his own disciple from being pair cultivation companions with her since the damage to his own reputation would be far too great. Thus he could only feel guilt toward this Martial Ancestor Hong Fu.

In order to make up for his guilt toward Hong Fu, Li Huayuan naturally didn't obstruct Han Li's trip to the Treasure Seizing Assembly in the slightest. Instead, he spared no effort to facilitate this long trip for Han Li and Dong Xuan'er.

In Li Huayuan's mind, with regards toward Han Li's terrible impression toward Dong Xuan'er, this long trip would change nothing. In truth, ever since his seventh disciple Wuxuan had first seen Dong Xuan'er, that girl had constantly remained in his mind. Several days before, he had actually summoned to courage to ask Li Huayuan whether or not he could raise the issue to Hong Fu to see if she would reconsider Wuxuan.

Naturally, Li Huayuan couldn't agree to such an absurd action. After fiercely rebuking this disciple, he sent the disciple out to handle external affairs to avoid having Wuxuan stir up trouble within the mountain.

After the strict scolding, Wuxuan became much more obedient and obeyed orders to handle matters, but Li Huayuan was still clearly able to feel this disciple's wily thoughts were still present. He couldn't help but sense an oncoming headache.

After seeing off the two young cultivators, Female Immortal Hong Fu chatted with the husband and wife a bit more before departing. Li Huayuan and the young woman entered Green Ripple

Cave and started their daily cultivation as the matter of Han Li and Dong Xuan'er had been set aside for the time being.

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The number one clan of the State of Yue, the Yan Clan, had its foundation in the unremarkable Lin Province. Not only was the area of this province ordinary, but the population was also of an average number. It could be said to be a completely ordinary land.

Qing Liang Town was a common small town of the Lin Province. Were it not for the exceptional scenery of Yan Liang Mountain, there wasn't anything that the population could have said to distinguish this place from any other. The Yan Clan's most important location, Yan Ling Castle, was located within Yan Liang Mountain.

Currently, Han Li held a sheet of paper in his hand. This was the invitation letter to the Treasure Seizing Assembly. The location of the assembly's meeting place was written on it, Yan Ling Castle.

After taking another look at the invitation letter and seeing that he wasn't mistaken, Han Li calmly put it away. Then he heard mocking words of ridicule from the girl at his side.

"You really are a blockhead! You actually read the invitation letter five or six times through and still don't feel ease. You truly have no small amount of shortcomings!"

This young woman's voice was very soft, yet it contained a deep allure. It was very capable of charming males and would even drive younger men wilder.

However, Han Li's expression didn't change in the slightest; it was as if he hadn't heard her. He unexpectedly raised his hand and shot three bowl-sized fireballs to the sky, erupting when they were high enough. He then insipidly said, "If the Yan Clan still doesn't send people to us after another moment, then we will leave and wait until tomorrow. Junior Martial Sister, since you have enough energy to quarrel, you may as well keep an eye out at a higher area and see if there is anyone else nearby just in case."

"Senior Martial Brother Han's guts are truly very small! We are at the entrance of the Yan Clan and you still believe there are any dangers? I see that you are a completely foolish and paranoid person!" Dong Xuan'er slanted her red lips and lazily said this. She leaned against a pine tree without the slightest intent of obeying.

At this moment, Han Li and the young woman stood at the peak of a somewhat small mountain, waiting for something to happen.

This was where the invitation letter indicated they would pick up guests. However, the two had arrived a while ago but they still hadn't seen anyone from the Yan Clan. Han Li couldn't help but grow greatly alert for fear there would be some mishap.

However, this little "princess" Dong viewed Han Li's cautiousness with contempt, believing Han Li was merely cowardly!

It has already been seven or eight days since they left Green Ripple Cave.

But on the journey, perhaps due to having inharmonious dispositions, the two found each other rather displeasing to the eye. A man and a woman would have some feelings toward each other during such a long journey, but with them, not the slightest feeling had developed.

Dong Xuan'er did not know why her bewitching flirts that had charmed hundreds of male cultivators hadn't the slightest effect on Han Li. Because of her wicked disposition, not long after she failed to control Han Li, she burst out, releasing a great temper.

However, Han Li didn't pay attention to the young girl and fundamentally ignored her rudeness. He only uttered one sentence: I can tell Martial Ancestor Hong Fu the exact words you just said. This immediately stifled Dong Xuan'er.

Although the young woman was accustomed to being spoiled with affection, she knew that Hong Fu was truly furious regarding her own reputation.

She truly took to heart the warning she was given when she had departed! If the loathable man before her truly told her master a few unpleasant words, heavy criticism would be unavoidable. Even locking her up again wouldn't be out of the question.

Recalling her last period of confinement, Dong Xuan'er couldn't

help but shiver. Although she wasn't willing to be completely subdued, she didn't dare to act as recklessly as before.

However, Han Li didn't make it too difficult for her, even allowing the girl to have cheap victories in verbal exchanges, not caring in the least. But if Dong Xuan'er was the slightest bit excessive, he would bluntly bring up Martial Senior Hong Fu, immediately rigidly suppressing Dong Xuan'er without the slightest leeway. After all, before departure, Hong Fu had spoken to the two, allowing Han Li to hear her stern warning.

On the journey, as this girl eloquently mocked and taunted him without end, as if he hadn't heard her words, Han Li only hurried on the journey. But when he insipidly mentioned Hong Fu's words, the originally eloquent Xuan'er's expression greatly changed, and she didn't dare to be so impudent.

Thus, the two hurried on their journey as they clashed during the day and slept during the night. Several days later, they eventually reached the peak of Yan Liang Mountain.

However, they were greeted by unexpected silence. The people from the Yan Clan should have already appeared, but the two of them have had to wait for over half a day, causing them to be a bit impatient.

Chapter 247: Yan Siblings

Perhaps they had been too impatient, but to the sky west of the mountain peak, two black dots eventually appeared. Two huge two-headed demonic birds gradually flew closer. They were the Two-Headed Ducks he had previously seen at the Great South Gathering. Saddled upon the demonic beasts were a man and a woman.

When she saw that strangers had appeared, the originally lazy Dong Xuan'er immediately roused her spirit and stood straight. She curiously stared at the large two-headed birds as they approached.

“We are truly sorry for having you two wait so long. This one is Yan Yu. The other is Yan Ling, my younger sister. We have come to bring you to Yan Ling Castle.” When the two ducks flew onto the mountain peak, the man and woman immediately jumped off. The young man firmly stood and said this with an apologetic tone.

“It is no matter, we also didn't wait very long!” Before Han Li could even open his mouth Dong Xuan'er daintily said this with bright eyes after having seen this heroic-looking man, Yan Yu. Her voice was extremely smooth, causing Han Li to raise his eyebrow upon hearing her.

Hearing Dong Xuan'er's new voice, it was as if the wicked and unruly woman he spent the past few days with had transformed into a girl from a noble house!

Yan Yu naturally did not know of this. When he saw Dong Xuan'er, a young woman as pretty as a flower, and heard her soft words aimed at him, his heart immediately shook, and a peculiar feeling rose. He straightened his back and brightly said, "Actually, there were Yan Clan disciples waiting here for guests. However, the disciples that were waiting here had to take care of some mishap. As such, there was no one here and you two were neglected! On behalf of the Yan Clan, I, Yan Yu, apologize to the two of you and hope you do not take offense."

When Dong Xuan'er heard this, she wore a smooth smile, and attraction flashed through her eyes. Just as she thought to say something else, Han Li's dull voice suddenly reached her ear, "With Junior Martial Sister's appearance, aren't you afraid of the repercussions from Martial Senior Hong Fu?"

When she heard this, Dong Xuan'er's expression greatly changed. Her mouth opened, but no words came out. This bizarre scene caused the Yan siblings to be a bit puzzled!

Yan Ling was a young woman that was fifteen or sixteen years old. She seemed to be a lively and charming person. She continuously switched her gaze between Han Li and Dong Xuan'er with her bright black eyes, giving people the impression that she was extremely clever.

"It was as Junior Martial Sister Dong had said. It was nothing; you were only a bit late. This one is certain that the Yan Clan wouldn't deliberately treat guests coldly! However, I am a bit baffled. What sort of mishap did the disciples who were originally here to receive guests encounter? Could it be that they clashed

against guests?” Stopping Dong Xuan’er careless use of the Spring Transformation Art’s seduction, Han Li lightly coughed two times and said a few polite words. He then made an inquiry of this “mishap” that was mentioned under the guise of a joke.

“This...” When Yan Yu heard Han Li’s words, he face wore a difficult expression. It was as if he were troubled about something and couldn’t say it clearly!

“Han Li, since it isn’t convenient for this Senior Martial Brother Yu. Don’t bother him as you wish! We should first travel to Yan Ling Castle and take a look. There should already be quite a few people there, yes?”

“That’s right. Let us go to Yan Ling Castle! There have already been many guests who arrived. They are currently discussing cultivation insights and are making all kinds of exchanges! Let us go now so you two should be able to participate.”

When Dong Xuan’er saw Yan Yu hesitate a bit, she said a few friendly words on his behalf and caused that Yan Clan disciple to greatly relax. He repeatedly agreed, and his good feelings toward Dong Xuan’er grew even greater. At the side, Yan Ling faintly became aware of Dong Xuan’er’s “bad intentions” and unhappily pouted with her small mouth.

At this moment, without paying heed to Dong Xuan’er, Han Li only faintly smiled and nodded his head in agreement, saying, “Then I must ask Senior Martial Brother Yan and Young Lady Yan to lead the way. Junior Martial Sister Dong and I are fine following from behind.”

Noticing that Han Li didn't further press the question, Yan Yu grew happier. Then he said apologetically, "I will first lead the way. I must ask that you diligently keep close. I hope you do not take offense!"

Although Yan Yu said this politely, Han Li clearly sensed that his words were largely directed to Dong Xuan'er. It seemed that this Yan Clan disciple had already quickly fallen to Dong Xuan'er's gentle grasp.

Han Li inwardly laughed coldly several times. He was disinterested in getting involved with Dong Xuan'er's absurd matters and feigned ignorance. Then he took out Li Huayuan's invitation letter, nimbly handing it over to Yan Yu. That Dong Xuan'er also took out her invitation letter from Female Immortal Hong Fu and handed it over with her slim lily-white hands. The alluring scent of her body and the luster of her jade-white skin dazzled Yan Yu for a moment, and he actually forgot to accept the letter.

His little sister was no longer able to stand idle and angrily took the invitation in place of Yan Yu. Her elder brother was then woken up by Dong Xuan'er's soft chuckles, causing him to deeply blush.

"There are no problems with Junior Martial Brother Han and Junior Martial Sister Dong's invitation cards. Let us set off then!"

After Yan Yu handed back their invitations, he mounted the two-

headed duck, feeling strange. He occasionally stole a few glances at Dong Xuan'er on the way. But at this moment, that wicked and unruly girl was actually displaying a decent and honorable appearance. This caused the Yan Clan elite's imagination to run wild!

The four leaped off the ground in succession and headed straight back to where Yan Clan siblings had come from.

After flying for tens of kilometers, the group landed at an area between two mountains.

At this moment, Yan Yu searched for a command tile he had on hand and firmly held it with both hands, violently pouring spiritual power into it. Suddenly, the command tile emitted a magnificent yellow mist of light over a large area, shooting toward the empty area ahead of them.

When the yellow light swept past the originally empty area, a rainbow-colored thread of light suddenly appeared! Then this rainbow streak of light flashed and scattered before their eyes, revealing an imposing ancient castle in the originally empty mountain ridge.

It seemed the huge walls reached about a hundred meters in height. There were even countless tall buildings that reached over the walls. Han Li and Dong Xuan'er felt this was rather unfamiliar and a bit too much to take in!

“This is our Yan Clan's most important location, Yan Ling Castle.

We are honored to welcome Junior Martial Brother Han and Junior Martial Sister Dong!” Yan Yu suddenly straightened his appearance before solemnly saying this.

Han Li smiled. Just as he thought to say something, at his side Dong Xuan'er suddenly yelped “Yi!” She gazed at the castle with an expression full of shock.

Seeing the girl with such an expression, Han Li naturally followed her gaze.

He only saw a martial competition stage to the side of a castle with two floating, differently dressed male disciples in a confrontation. One was wearing the brown clothes of the Yan Clan, a man with a swift and fierce appearance. The other had a curled beard, gray eyes, dark skin and yellow hair. He was wearing an azure robe; he appeared quite strange!

There was a giant barrier of white light enveloping the stage; the barrier seemed to be sparkling. Outside of the light barrier, there stood two crowds, one to the east and one to the west. What was most eye-catching were the types of clothing worn by the two crowds. One of the crowds were standing in formation and were absolutely silent, having the bearing of regular training. They were those from the Yan Clan. The other crowd mostly consisted of eccentrics with curly beards. They were all wearing green robes and had green eyes and yellow hair. There were also a few average people in there.

After Han Li clearly saw this, he wore a somewhat amazed expression. He could not help but look at the Yan siblings to his

side. Perhaps they had an explanation?

Without waiting for Han Li to open his mouth, Yan Yu's expression became a bit unnatural after watching this scene. To the side, Yan Ling clenched a fist and said completely furiously, "They actually started another challenge. They even act so viciously. This is truly outrageous!"

When Han Li heard this, his heart shook. He then asked a probing question, "Could it be that these people aren't the Yan Clan's guests?"

"Naturally, they aren't! These fellows came knocking on our door and injured two of our disciples, a fifteen year-old Junior Martial Brother and a sixteen year-old Junior Martial Brother. Furthermore, they insisted on participating in the Treasure Seizing Assembly. I don't know what the elders were thinking, but they actually agreed. This is truly infuriating!"

Yan Ling hadn't noticed Yan Yu's gaze, a clear sign for her to stop. But she continued unrestrained, releasing a girl's small temper. When Han Li saw this, he couldn't help but laugh! Yan Yu then wore an embarrassed expression, not knowing what to say!

"It seems this is the main reason why we were waiting on the mountain peak for so long! Could Senior Martial Brother Yu tell Xuan'er a few details?" Without Han Li needing to inquire, Dong Xuan'er curiously hooked onto Yan Yu as if she had bewitched him. After a moment of hesitation, Yan Yu gave a straightforward answer.

“These people arrived this morning at our Yan Ling Castle. When they arrived outside the castle, they had no invitations and wanted to break through, injuring two of the Junior Martial Brothers who were receiving guests. When the other disciples hurried after received the request for help, intending to teach these fellows a lesson, they did not think that these people would actually take out a letter and a token that actually made the squad elders grow solemn. They even swallowed their words and courteously invited them into the castle.”

“However, these people didn’t know their place, and immediately after entering Yan Ling Castle, they requested the Yan Clan to exchange pointers with them. After some consideration from the elders, they agreed to give them a bit of difficulty. The competition would be ten matches, all between Foundation Establishment disciples! I fought two competitions ago for several matches. As for the results...” Yan Yu shook his head, his expression somewhat mournful. It was clear that the Yan Clan was in a disadvantageous position.

Chapter 248: Rivals

“Normally in a competition, casualties and injuries are nothing, a very common matter. But these people don’t cultivate any cultivation techniques. Each and every one of them uses poison and Yin magic arts of the Devilish Dao. All the disciples who went against them were defeated. They either indescribably fainted or were poisoned by mysterious means. All of their injuries were extremely cruel and are unable to be easily treated. But fortunately, these because these people felt a bit of fear being inside Yan Ling Castle, there were no serious injuries or deaths. This really is the only silver lining! Sigh, if you two currently saw the Yan Clan on stage, it would truly be too shameful!” Yan Yu said with an embarrassed expression.

“When we went left, we heard that the elders were no longer able to hold their ground and had already called Elder Brother’s subordinates, the Martial Arms Hall disciples. They are the elite disciples of the Yan Clan, cultivating secret magics. They will certainly teach these fellows a lesson.” Yan Ling could not help but say this, waving a clenched fist.

“Making trouble, what does a little girl know about fighting and killing? Right now, these guest have already had us come to receive them and bring them back. Hurry, have Uncle Li send more disciples to welcome the guests, else would you have the other guests wait longer?” Yan Yu stiffened his face and rebuked his little sister. Then he sent the unhappy young girl on her way.

At that moment, Yan Yu turned towards Han Li and Dong Xuan’er and explained, “Because there had recently been many guests, there have been many shadier characters mixed in among

them. As a result, a portion of the protection formation guarding the Yan Clan Castle has been activated. Currently within the castle, there has been many particular areas in the castle that no longer allow the use of sound transmission talismans and other long-distance magic techniques. Thus, I could only send my younger sister off! My younger sister and I weren't originally supposed to welcome guests, but the castle is currently short of hands and there have been many people harboring malicious intentions dropping on our door, forcing us to temporarily lend a hand." After Yan Yu said this, his face sunk as he gazed into the distance, watching the magic battle between the Yan Clan disciple and the eccentric.

"That being said, Senior Martial Brother Yu is an elite disciple of the Yan Clan. Surely you are of a high position in the Yan Clan!" Dong Xuan'er eyes gleamed as she said this with a sweet smile. Since she was already beautiful, this suddenly strong grace caused Yan Yu to despondently sink into her gaze for a moment.

"This... It's nothing!" Yan Yu restlessly muttered to himself. He didn't know what to say. He only felt that this young lady Dong was far too beautiful, as if she were the perfect sweetheart of his dreams!

She giggled! "This..."

"Senior Brother Yan, I don't know if it is convenient, but could we go look a look at the competition over there? This one wants to see who dared to cause trouble at the sacred Yan Clan!"

Dong Xuan'er felt that Yan Yu's expression was rather amusing

and laughed crisply several times. She wanted to tease him some more, but she did not think that Han Li would suddenly speak and interrupt what she was going to say next!

“Ah... you want to watch? Of course you can! This match is against my own Senior Cousin of the Martial Arms Hall. His Dao spells are refined to the point where he is among the top ten. Surely he can give his opponent a hard time!” Han Li had roused Yan Yu. At first, he stared blankly, but he soon delightedly replied.

When Han Li heard this, he inwardly smiled. On one hand, Han Li knew that he had no reason to deny Yan Yu. On the other, he felt that this time, the chances for victory against Dong Xuan'er were great, allowing him to feel refreshed.

As such, they flew toward the competition stage nearby and walked toward the crowd.

After Han Li walked closer, he became startled upon discovering that there were no less than a hundred cultivators watching. Furthermore, from their appearances, a majority of them weren't from the State of Yue but rather travelers from other countries. It was truly strange!

Han Li was greatly puzzled, but as a guest, it wouldn't be proper for him to ask about too many things! He could only hold his curiosity in his belly and feign ignorance.

As for Dong Xuan'er at the side, she was smiling and happily chatting with Yan Yu. However, she gave a slight look at Han Li

with surprise in her eyes. It seemed she wasn't just a pillow embroidered pretty face after all!

It was unknown what this wicked and unruly girl planned to do, but she was the same as Han Li; although they felt that something was fishy, they didn't want to ask. This caused Han Li to be a bit gloomy.

“Xuan'er, you also came! This is great. I thought Martial Senior Hong Fu hadn't released you!” Of three people who walked by, one was a male cultivator with an elegant face who happened to turn his head and saw Dong Xuan'er. This person immediately wore an extremely happy expression and quickly walked over, calling her with great affection.

When this person ran over, Dong Xuan'er stared with a smile, but Yan Yu grew somewhat annoyed. His gaze started to continuously flicker.

As an outsider, Han Li's expression hadn't changed in the slightest! He clearly understood that this person was most likely one of Dong Xuan'er's previous toys! Could this be the 'Feng Clan youngster' that his master's wife had previously mentioned?

“Senior Martial Brother Feng! I truly did not think that Martial Senior Du would send Senior Martial Brother to this assembly!” An exceptional expression flashed on Dong Xuan'er's face, and after she rolled her eyes, she calmly greeted him as if this person was an ordinary friend.

This caused Yan Yu's expression to improve by much, but this Senior Martial Brother Feng was startled and immediately paid attention to Yan Yu and Han Li who were at Dong Xuan'er's side.

Fortunately, Han Li saw this person's gaze. He then faintly smiled and took a half step back from Dong Xuan'er, revealing his innocence. But when he saw Yan Yu giving an unrestrained gaze in return, Senior Martial Brother Feng clearly knew who his enemy was. His expression immediately darkened as he sized up Yan Yu several times.

Although Han Li found this scene somewhat funny, he was somewhat baffled! Rumors had it that Dong Xuan'er and this Senior Martial Brother Feng had long wished to pair cultivate! But now, this wicked and unruly girl no longer treated this Senior Martial Brother Feng favorably! Could it be that the rumor was wrong?

As Han Li thought of this, Han Li shook his head, disinclined to further this matter. He didn't want to waste energy by pondering about such gossip.

As a result, he walked a few steps away, leaving the three behind.

Han Li didn't care if this Senior Martial Brother Feng and Yan Yu were rivals in love, and he cared even less about whether everything went Dong Xuan'er's way. At this moment, he was completely focused on the battle inside the light barrier.

Yan Yu truly did not boast!

This elder cousin of his was truly a sight to behold. The earth attribute Dao technique he used had reached perfection. He had rushed forth, summoning stones the size of several meters from his palm to smash the opposition. The barrage seemed endless. A yellow triangular banner was erected in front of him, summoning a yellow wind. The wind tightly wrapped around him as protection.

However, this green-robed opponent wasn't going to take it lying down! He madly hissed and fluttered like a viper, weaving a black net in front of him that wind and rain couldn't penetrate. The rocks were all bounced back by the net. A few happened to directly bounce back, keeping the hands and feet of that Yan Clan elite busy. As for magic tools, the green-robed opponent had six to seven shining white magic skulls floating all around him. It was unknown what purpose they served.

As such, one person wildly attacked and one steadily guarded; for the time being, a deadlock had occurred!

But it was very clear that these two were probing each other out and hadn't made any real moves. As a result, although the scene was very lively with stones flying throughout the sky and surging black Qi, they were both calm and composed, neither hurried nor impatient; the slightest appearance of strain was not shown.

As Han Li watched, he was entranced. But then he heard Dong Xuan'er say, "Senior Martial Brother Han, what do you say?" This slightly distracted him. Without even turning his head, he reflexively replied, "Yeah".

But when he said “Yeah”, Han Li immediately felt this was a mistake and hastily turned his head.

He only saw those two, who should’ve been hostile rivals in love, suddenly show an undesirable expression towards him as if they were teaming up in opposition of a common enemy.

It was obvious he had been framed by that wicked and unruly girl!

“You’ve heard it! Senior Martial Brother Han also admits it. I must keep close to him on this journey. This was an order that came from my own Master!” Dong Xuan’er lamented with a cute, pitiful appearance. She took advantage of the thoughtlessness from the two’s infatuation and immediately had Han Li become the scapegoat, leaving him dumbfounded.

During his time of carelessness, this Dong Xuan’er took advantage of this vulnerability and passed on two great annoyances onto him. It was obviously her revenge towards him because he had long used Hong Fu’s name on the journey to greatly suppress her. Surely if those two taught him a lesson, her mood would greatly improve.

Han Li looked at the two as they gazed onto him like prey and sighed. Just as he thought to say something, the two’s expressions suddenly changed, and their gaze shifted onto the stage behind Han Li. Yan Yu’s expression became especially strained.

Seeing this scene, Han Li naturally realized that something had happened and hurriedly turned his head.

He saw the deadlock in the light barrier break!

The person from the Yan Clan had already stopped summoning the huge stones and was grasping a yellow-green paper fan with both hands. He strenuously waved his fan toward his opponent. This paper fan clearly should've been light but every time he waved the fan, he seemed to consume a great amount of physical strength, causing his face to lace with sweat!

Chapter 249: Competition

With every wave of the fan, dense green fog shot out from the fan, directly heading toward the green-robed eccentric in front. With these seven to eight fan waves, the purple fog had long become incredibly thick and tightly enveloped the other person, forming a large purple sphere!

The green-robed eccentric was enshrouded in a sphere of black Qi, which blocked the green fog from entering it.

The black Qi and the green fog incessantly roiled and bit at each other, as if they were both alive. But regardless of how it was seen, under the control of the Yan Clan disciple, the green fog had a large advantage and was steadily suppressing the black Qi further and further.

“My cousin’s Bone Rotting Treasure Fan is an extremely well-known top-grade magic tool; if one comes into contact with even a tiny amount of the poisonous fog it releases, it will definitely melt away one’s flesh. However, my cousin always used to believe that this fan is too vicious, and so he was unwilling to use it lightly. But now that he is taking this seriously and has used it immediately, it is apparent that he has already determined not to allow the other person to retreat with their entire body intact!”

Seeing this, Yan Yu smiled exuberantly, explaining to the Dong Xuan’er standing to the side.

“Whoa! Is this fan really so well known? Do you know how it

would compare to the famous Wind Lightning Fan? Which one is more powerful?” Dong Xuan’er lightly smiled, and the corner of her mouth raised slightly, putting on an exciting, foxy charm.

“Based on power alone, this fan may not be as strong as the Wind Lightning Fan. But as long as a cultivator with wood attribute spiritual roots uses it, the magic tool can be easily controlled unlike the Wind Lightning Fan; Unless one has both wind and thunder attribute spiritual roots, one cannot release the Wind Lightning Fan’s full power! Thus, this Bone Rotting Fan’s value is even above that of the Wind Lightning Fan!” Yan Yu was barely able to suppress the fantasies in his thoughts and carefully explained it, his heart beating wildly upon seeing Dong Xuan’er’s enchanting smile.

“What rubbish! This kind of a common top-grade magic tool, how can you even compare it to the Wind Lightning Fan? To have even one-tenth of its power would already be considered decent! In reality, I think that this fan is not even as powerful as the magic tool I possess, the Purple Light Cymbals.” A jealous expression surfaced on Senior Martial Brother Feng. Dong Xuan’er and Yan Yu were talking and laughing with one another, so he intentionally spoke sardonically.

“You dare to look down upon the magic tools that my Yan Clan refines? Good! Let me see the power of your Purple Light Cymbals, then!” Yan Yu, hearing the other person belittle the Bone Rotting Fan’s power like that, couldn’t help but want to test the other person a little out of anger.

“Good, I was just wanting to experience the magic power of the

Yan Clan's gifted disciple anyways!" Senior Martial Brother Feng heard the other person's words, then coldly laughed once and immediately agreed.

The two had seemingly forgotten all about their common enemy Han Li for the moment.

"Ah, forget about it, this junior sister was only carelessly asking! Why is it necessary to become so enraged? The two Senior Martial Brothers should each take a step back; is this not possible?" Dong Xuan'er seemed as if she was discouraging them, but in reality this caused the two people to be unwilling to show weakness in front of their sweetheart. Neither of them was willing to lose face in front of Dong Xuan'er.

Of course, for these two people to immediately begin fighting was also not entirely likely! After all, the two of them were only jealous of each other; what they said earlier was all only said in a moment of anger! They were still aware of the misgivings in their heart. However, if Dong Xuan'er were to tease both sides with a few more sentences, the outcome would be difficult to predict!

Although Han Li did not care about this conflict, he still heard the things going on beside him very clearly and couldn't help but secretly shake his head. He felt that this wicked and unruly woman was truly a demon who stirred up trouble; sure enough, there would be disturbances no matter where they went. No wonder that Hong Fu always wanted him to control this little girl.

Even so, both the one surnamed Feng and Yan Yu both did not appear to be stupid people, so how come now they seemed to be so

impulsive and aggressive? Could this Dong Xuan'er's seductive technique actually be so powerful? Would even late Foundation Establishment cultivators unwittingly have their mental states affected?

After Han Li thought about it again, he couldn't help but feel inwardly shocked!

However, Han Li was disinclined to ask these two muddled people! As for which one of them survived, what did it matter to him?

But Han Li also felt that it was somewhat strange. No matter how this flirtatious Dong Xuan'er could bewitch people into falling head over heels for her, in his eyes, Dong Xuan'er had no charm whatsoever, nor did he get aroused.

In reality, Han Li wasn't the only one who wondered about this matter, Dong Xuan'er was even more depressed! Her seduction technique, for some unknown reason, was actually completely ineffective against the most annoying person. Otherwise, she would've sent him turning about in circles; how could she let him be such threat on the journey here?

Just when Han Li and Dong Xuan'er were both thinking about such things, the situation in the arena suddenly drastically changed.

The black Qi enveloped by the green fog suddenly contracted and began to thinly spread out; in the blink of an eye, the green-robed

person who was deeply hidden suddenly came into view. The few skulls surrounding him opened their mouths and began to furiously suck in the black Qi all around, causing the black Qi to thin.

Although the opposing Yan Clan member did not know what the other person intended to do, since the other person had destroyed his own defenses, he naturally would not be polite. He immediately pointed the fan in his hands, and the green fog immediately surged forwards just when the black Qi had no power to respond!

“Brat, you want to show off in front of me just based on some poisonous fog? You are acting quite recklessly! You still don’t know yet that we are all Martial Ancestors who play with poison!” the green-robed person guffawed, laughing strangely a few times.

Next, he stretched out a palm and quickly tapped the heavenly spiritual covering of those skulls. These skulls immediately expanded to the size of chariot wheels. Their ghastly white exterior was then covered in a layer of black Qi, appearing even more strange and malevolent.

Suddenly, they sucked in all of the remaining black Qi and abruptly opened their large mouths, absorbing the green fog that had originally been blocked outside into their mouths. In addition, with every breath they sucked in, they expanded slightly as if they were eating.

Across from him, Yan Yu’s elder cousin opposite him, seeing this, was shocked. He hurriedly directed the treasure fan in his hand,

wanting to retrieve the green fog, but clearly he was already too late. Only one-third of the original poisonous fog could retreat; the majority was all swallowed up by the opponent's skulls.

The yellow-green surface of the fan became pitch black, causing all the members of the Yan Clan to feel pain in their hearts; they knew that from today onwards, the power of this Bone Rotting Fan would be greatly reduced!

This Yan Clan disciple had yet to pull himself together from the destruction of his magic tool when the aggressively expanding huge skulls, under the control of the green-robed person, flew towards him making "wu wu" noises. In a flash, they appeared before his eyes, causing him to be greatly frightened, hurriedly reaching his hand towards his storage pouch.

However, those skulls simultaneously opened their mouths, and numerous streaks of pitch-black columns of light simultaneously shot out, converging into a huge column of light. It actually instantaneously broke a hole in the Yan Clan member's protective yellow wind, knocking him out. He lost consciousness and fell through the air with a "gudong".

A Yan Clan disciple standing to the side, seeing that the victor had already been determined, was naturally unwilling to see a member of his clan fall and be severely injured, so he immediately flew out alone to catch Yan Yu's cousin, then flew back.

"The Demon Spirit Sect's profound techniques are, as expected, peerless and exquisite; our Yan clan actually lost four out of five of the matches. Should we begin the sixth match next?" a Yan Clan

elder stepped out and said coldly to those who called themselves the Demon Spirit Sect. Despite his aged appearance, his eyes shone brightly.

“Let’s forget about it! It’s not too late to hold the remaining five matches after the Yan Clan’s Life and Death Hall’s disciple comes. I have long heard of the great reputation of the Yan Clan’s blood cultivator!” A mysterious person wearing a silver demonic mask stepped out from the group of Demon Spirit Sect disciples. From his gentle, refined, and rich voice, he seemed to be a very young male.

“Okay! Since the young Sect Master really has such refined interest, my Yan Clan is naturally willing to accommodate! Then, today’s competition will temporarily end here!” The elder was first shocked upon hearing this; however, unwilling to show weakness, he agreed, then waved his sleeve, turned around, and left.

The young Sect Master did not mind. He gently laughed, then elegantly turned around and brought his men, leaving the area.

The other onlooking cultivators, after taking in this treat for their eyes, also silently began to disappear.

Han Li gently shook his head when he suddenly heard the sound of Yan Yu muttering to himself:

“How is this possible, my cousin actually also lost? He is our Martial Arms Hall’s expert!”

“What expert, wasn’t he still easily defeated by the opponent?” Senior Martial Brother Feng curled his lips; he naturally would not easily let an opportunity to attack his rival in love slip by.

“You?” Yan Yu’s face revealed an expression of rage which was about to flare up, but Dong Xuan’er’s following sentence immediately delighted him.

“Senior Martial Brother Yan Yu, I have been traveling for numerous days and am somewhat tired; can you arrange for a suitable room to allow this junior sister to rest a moment? Any other exchange activities can wait until tomorrow!” Dong Xuan’er said lazily, suddenly stretching her lithe waist.

“Of course I can! Junior Martial Sister Dong, I will bring you to a room specifically prepared for female cultivators. Junior Martial Brother Han and others, do as you please!” Yan Yu happily said, appearing as if he were putting on a show.

Han Li lightly laughed; he didn’t have any objections.

He had already safely brought Dong Xuan’er to Yan Ling Castle, thus successfully finishing his duty. As for any other matters, he couldn’t worry about them, and he didn’t want to worry about them! This being the case, he lightly mentioned that he wanted to take a look at the surroundings, then left the group of people.

Chapter 250: Meeting An Old Friend

As Han Li wished to be far away from Dong Xuan'er, Senior Martial Brother Feng and Yan Yu naturally looked forward to this!

Thus, not only did Yan Yu not attempt to stop him, but he even very warmly gave him a jade slip containing a map of Yan Ling Castle so that Han Li could save some time and directly head to his destination instead of running all over the place like a dizzy fly.

As for Dong Xuan'er, although she felt very surprised that Han Li had suddenly let go and stopped restricting her, she was naturally very happy that she had regained her independence and, like a fish in water, could be among many male cultivators. Of course, she still used an astonished expression to glance at Han Li a few times; no matter how much she thought about it, she could not decipher the intentions behind his movements.

“Intentions? Hmph, it's just that I don't want to carry around a burden with me. Also, moving as an individual is much more unrestrained!” Han Li thought extremely leisurely while walking on the azure stone roads of Yan Ling Castle, his hands clasped behind his back. From time to time, he would gaze at the shops to his left and right.

These were all selling talisman, tool, and pill refinement materials, and there were also a few that sold low-grade magic tools; however, the store owners were mostly mortals with no magic power.

This was not that strange; the land of the entire Yan Ling Castle was extremely large, and the population was around a few hundred thousand. However, those who had spiritual roots and could cultivate magic techniques were only a small portion; the vast majority were all mortals.

Of these mortals, who originally should have been living in the secular world, some did not have spiritual roots but were of the bloodline of the Yan Clan, while others were relatives of Yan Clan disciples. After all, marriages only between fellow members of the Yan Clan was something that was highly inappropriate, so they appropriately assimilated some new blood, allowing the Yan clan to continue to be preserved and strengthened.

Of course, to maintain secrecy, these mortals who had entered the Yan Ling Castle could never leave the city; they could only grow old and die of sickness here. Although they no longer had to worry about basic necessities, it was still an extremely sorrowful matter.

The new people who had been transferred in were not so bad; at least they had seen the teeming world outside. However, those who had been born in the castle but did not have spiritual roots did not have even a single opportunity to see the outside world.

Even so, of the mortals who initially entered the castle, not a single one was coerced! They all were at the end of their ropes or had received the great aid of the Yan Clan, and were willing for it to be this way. Adding on the fact that Yan Ling Castle was heavily guarded and was shrouded by formations and mortals who tried to secretly leave the castle were immediately killed upon discovery,

no one had heard yet of any mortal successfully escaping from this area.

Of course, Han Li did not guess this information; rather, it was a small piece of information included on the jade slip with the map. Thus, Han Li had a rough impression of this Yan Ling Castle in his mind.

Now, he was headed to a teahouse in the city. This was because, based on Han Li's understanding, the majority of cultivators liked good tea very much, and a teahouse was an essential location for all cultivators to visit. Han Li felt that he could perhaps meet up with some other cultivators there and join up with a small group; this was an opportunity to exchange that was very difficult to come by. After all, to completely ignore the outside world was also not desirable!

At the end of this stone street, near a three-way intersection, one should be able to see the teahouse sign. Han Li, thinking in this way, couldn't help but quicken his steps.

However, the sound of an intense argument between a male and a female suddenly could be heard from some shop to the side. Next, following a male's angry howls, a dressed-up young woman angrily walked out from the room, directly rushing towards the stone road and just so happened to run into a flabbergasted Han Li.

This young woman was extremely beautiful, so Han Li, who possessed the same weakness as every other male, couldn't help but absent-mindedly glance at her. In the end, when Han Li saw clearly the young woman's appearance, he instantly stopped in

place, shocked.

The young woman, seeing Han Li's gazing at her without restraint, felt incredibly aggravated in her heart!

However, she had also lived in the castle for a long time; although she had no magic power, she could tell Han Li's identity as a cultivator based on his attire. Although because she was angry and humiliated she did not pay attention to Han Li's appearance, only feeling that he seemed somewhat familiar, she still strongly resisted her anger, gently lowering her head yet saying stiffly:

"Esteemed cultivator, could you let this young woman pass? I am already married! This esteemed individual, gazing at a common young woman in this way, are you not worried that you are lacking in proper manners?"

After saying this sentence, the young woman was not actually worried; after all, inside Yan Ling Castle, discipline was tight, and there were restrictions preventing cultivators from disturbing the lives of mortals. The punishment for disobeying this was extremely severe! Naturally, mortals also had to preserve their absolute respect for cultivators; if they neglected this, the cultivators could deal with them as they wished.

In addition, because they were in a public place, she was even more unafraid that the other person would have any kind of improper conduct.

But the young woman had lowered her head for a long time, yet

she did not see the cultivator in front of her move at all. Since he did seem to intend to allow her to pass yet did not openly reprimand her either, this caused her to feel somewhat shocked; she couldn't help but raise her graceful body and glanced over.

In the end, an impulsive face with an enigmatic smile appeared before her eyes. This face's familiarity immediately brought the young woman to a night in a rear courtyard ten years ago; the scene of an incomparably stingy Senior Martial Brother and a clever, sly little girl arguing with each other was vivid in her mind!

“Senior Martial Brother?”

“Junior Martial Sister!”

The young woman finally recognized this face that had not changed at all. Han Li, after hearing the other person call him Senior Martial Brother, became absolutely sure that this “beautiful enough to eat” young woman was truly the clever, sly little girl he had met many years ago—Mo Caihuan, Doctor Mo's youngest daughter, the one whom he had personally called Junior Apprentice Sister!

“Are you really Senior Martial Brother Han Li?” Mo Caihuan was first extremely stunned. She asked with mixed feelings, but she still appeared to not dare to believe it.

“Is the Winding Fragrance Pill I gave you still effective?” Han Li suddenly asked in a hushed tone.

“Senior..... Senior Martial Brother, it really is you!” Seeing that Han Li had named the gift he had given her back then, Mo Caihuan no longer had any doubt. Her eyes suddenly turned red, and she began to sob, as if she had been greatly wronged.

Han Li was dumbfounded at the moment! After all, they were still on the stone road, so there were still passerbys and a few cultivators walking through; if this beautiful young woman were seen crying in front of him, wouldn't all kinds of assumptions be made about him?!

Thinking of this, Han Li scratched his head, then summoned his courage and said to Mo Caihuan:

“Junior Martial Sister, how about we find a different place to talk! This does not seem to be the right place to have a conversation.”

“En!..... I'll listen to Senior Martial Brother,” Mo Caihuan said obediently, temporarily stopping her crying.

Her behavior just now greatly shocked Han Li! After all, the Mo Caihuan in his memories was like a little demoness; for her to suddenly be so gentle and obedient was truly something that he was not used to. But what place was relatively peaceful? Han Li thought to himself and glanced at the street somewhat melancholically.

“Come to my house! My mother is also there,” Mo Caihuan suddenly opened her mouth and said after she had calmed down a

little.

“Fourth Martial Mother is also at Yan Ling Castle?”

Han Li was shocked!

It seemed like something big had really happened at the Mo Estate. Otherwise, with Lady Yan being the head of the Mo Estate, they would not lightly leave that place.

“Yes, Senior Martial Brother! My mother is afflicted by a very severe illness! You must save her!” Tears flashed in Mo Caihuan’s eyes as she bitterly begged him.

“Okay, if there’s anything, we can talk about it once we reach your mother’s place. As long as it isn’t an incurable disease, Senior Martial Brother can still cure it!” Seeing Mo Caihuan’s pitiful appearance, Han Li naturally thought of the carefree life that she led at the Mo Estate. Thus, his heart couldn’t help but soften, and he comforted her with his words.

“En! I trust Senior Martial Brother’s words. That year, Second Elder Sister said that Senior Martial Brother’s medical technique was already above hers. Now that you’re here, my mother can be saved!”

Hearing Han Li’s promise, Mo Caihuan stopped weeping and began to laugh. When he saw her tender and beautiful appearance, Han Li was unable to stop himself from becoming absent-minded;

luckily, he immediately sobered up before he made a fool of himself.

“Let’s go, my house is not far from here. As soon as we pass through one more street, we’ll be there. When my mother meets Senior Martial Brother, she will definitely be very happy!” Mo Caihuan very naturally pulled onto Han Li’s sleeve, leading him forwards as they walked. She seemed to be elated, as if she had found a pillar to lean on.

A young woman taking the initiative to pull along a male, walking on the street in public, naturally attracted the sidelong glances of many bystanders. Luckily, Han Li’s attire as a cultivator meant that nobody dared to say anything unpleasant in front of the two of them; as for what they would discuss when they were far away, it would be difficult to say!

“Junior Martial Sister, how did you and your mother end up here? Did something happen at the Mo Estate?” Han Li and Mo Caihuan had been walking shoulder-to-shoulder. Just when Mo Caihuan was not paying attention, he gently retrieved his sleeve and asked, not revealing his thoughts.

“This matter will take a long time to explain! The Mo Estate was destroyed seven years ago, and the Fearsome Flood Dragon Association was also expelled!” Upon hearing this, Mo Caihuan faintly trembled, and her expression darkened as she responded.

“Then what about the other two Mo Junior Martial Sisters and their mothers?” Although Han Li had long since guessed the situation pretty well, he still sighed and asked about the situation

of her other family members.

“Second and Fifth Mother both died, and I’m not sure about the rest. Because my mother and I had to kill our way out and at the time everything was too messy, everyone could only escape on their own!” Mo Caihuan’s voice began to shake. Clearly, she was suffering internally.

Chapter 251: Destruction

Seeing Mo Caihuan's appearance, Han Li knew that now was not the time to ask for the whole story, so he no longer pursued it. Just like that, Mo Caihuan brought him to a small store on a side road, then stopped.

"This place?" Han Li was slightly amazed, and he glanced at Mo Caihuan inquisitively.

"Yes, this is the place! My mother and I do some small business here; we only wanted to earn some spirit stones to buy some medicinal pills to suppress her illness," Mo Caihuan said somewhat embarrassed as her face reddened. Then, she took the lead and walked in.

Seeing this, Han Li smiled. He didn't say anything and simply followed her inside.

"Mother, look who I've brought here!"

Han Li had just stepped into the store when he heard Mo Caihuan speak as if she were presenting a treasure! Next, another female voice that Han Li was familiar with also spoke, but it was somewhat older.

"Who else could come? Ever since your eldest uncle Zhu died, only the neighbor, Aunt Xiang Lian, has come to see us!"

There was no doubting that this voice was Lady Yan's voice, although it was much more hoarse than before!

"No, Senior Martial Brother has come. I ran into Senior Martial Brother in the castle!" Mo Caihuan excitedly shouted.

"Senior Martial Brother? Didn't your few Senior Martial Brothers die a long time ago! You silly child, your mind is probably becoming muddled," Lady Yan brought up, clearly somewhat worried.

At this time, Han Li was already clear on the circumstances in the store.

A sixty-or seventy-foot small room, numerous wooden counters with neatly placed low-grade talismans placed on them, and a few unprofitable materials. There was also a wooden door leading to the inner rooms, and behind the wooden counter was a woman lying on a bamboo armchair, gazing at Mo Caihuan in front of her with a worry-stricken face.

This was none other than Lady Yan, whom he had not seen for nearly ten years!

However, her appearance had aged significantly, and from her face it was clear that she was ill; one could only see a shadow of the formerly beautiful woman between her eyebrows.

Han Li's entrance naturally attracted the attention of Lady Yan.

When she saw clearly that it was Han Li, she first was shocked and couldn't help but want to stand up, but this clearly was not something that she, with her severe sickness, could do; she only straightened half of her body before she once again fell back down. The nearby Mo Caihuan hurriedly reached out and held her up.

“You are Han Li?” Lady Yan strenuously panted a few times; like Mo Caihuan, her shock was not small, but in addition to her shock, a trace of expectation and happiness appeared on her face.

Han Li naturally knew what the other person was thinking in her heart, but after hesitating for a moment, he still took a few steps over and greeted her respectfully:

“Fourth Martial Mother, greetings!”

“You..... you are still willing to recognize me as your teacher's wife? You don't hold a grudge about what happened back then?” Happiness flashed across Lady Yan's face upon hearing Han Li call her “Fourth Martial Mother”, but she also asked this out of suspicion, not daring to believe it.

“What happened back then, when we were determining who was in the wrong, me or Master Mo, we will not talk about it for now. However, the master-disciple relationship between me and Master Mo was genuine; thus, I still should call you Marital Mother,” Han Li replied, his expression calm.

“As for the issue of the poison he forced into me, it's even more irrelevant! Aren't I standing here in perfect condition?” Han Li

added carelessly. Now, based on his identity as a Foundation Establishment cultivator, he naturally did not need to hold a grudge against these mortals. The furious disputes he had with Lady Yan and his master's other wives, he naturally did not place them in his eyes.

“Yes, based on your intellect your life should be very good in the cultivating world! Not like me and your other Martial Mothers, who have all become stray dogs..... sigh.....” Lady Yan had just sighed with regret when her face suddenly became blood-red, and she was hit by a bout of coughing.

“Mother, you're okay, right? Senior Martial Brother.....” Mo Caihuan began to panic, and she hurriedly began to gently stroke Lady Yan's chest. Her gaze towards Han Li was filled with pleading.

“Let me take a look!”

Han Li could not resist Mo Caihuan's grief-filled gaze; he gently sighed, then reached his hand out and grasped the pulse on Lady Yan's wrist. After a brief moment, his expression naturally relaxed, and then he said:

“It's not serious; it's just that her old wound has begun to act up again. Her illness is a result of this wound compounded with the lack of rest and years of overly taxing her mind and body!”

“Is it easy to cure?” Mo Caihuan asked anxiously.

“Don’t worry, if I had to deal with these old wounds ten years ago, it truly would have been somewhat difficult! But now, it’s a trivial matter!” Han Li said comfortingly. Then, he took out a box of needles from his storage pouch and performed an acupuncture technique on Lady Yan, causing her to immediately stop coughing!

“In the future, take one pill every day. After ten or so days, you should be completely cured!” Han Li said self-confidently as he pulled out a small bottle and handed it to Lady Yan.

Lady Yan’s whole body did not feel uncomfortable at all! The disease that had plagued her for years actually and truly had gone without returning. At this time, she glowed as if she had been revitalized and gotten a few years younger. Now that she received the bottle, she felt her mood surge even more; what was she to say?

“Han Li.....” Lady Yan had only just begun to express her gratitude when Han Li spoke and interrupted her.

“Now, can you tell me exactly what happened to the Mo Estate, as well as how you guys arrived at Yan Ling Castle?” Han Li still wanted to understand exactly how this had occurred.

A sorrowful expression appeared on Lady Yan’s face upon hearing this, and she slowly began to recount what happened that year!

It turned out that when Han Li had taken care of Ouyang Feitian of the Hegemon’s Villa, it truly had allowed the Fearsome Flood Dragon Association, which had been prepared for it, to take a large

advantage and swallow up the greater half of the land and benefits. However, the other overlord in the State of Lan, the Rainbow Sect, responded rather quickly as well, swallowing the remaining smaller half. In this way, the State of Lan now consisted of two powers living side by side.

But since the equilibrium between the three powers had been broken, naturally the same mountain could not house two tigers!

In the end, when the Mo Estate-led Fearsome Flood Dragon Association and the Rainbow Sect exchanged blows, they discovered that they had made a grave mistake! They should not have let Ouyang Feitian die like that! This Rainbow Sect's strength had vastly exceeded the outward strength that they displayed. In just one battle, the Fearsome Flood Dragon Association suffered a huge defeat.

After that, the Fearsome Flood Dragon Association was pulled up from its roots, and the Mo Estate also met with attacks from numerous experts. The helpless women could only break through the siege and run for their lives. In the end, Second Wife Lady Li and Fifth Wife Lady Wang lost their lives when breaking through, and when the others escaped from the siege, they immediately split up and went into hiding.

As a result of their actions, Lady Yan and Mo Caihuan were heavily pursued. Just when it seemed the two were about to lose their lives, a middle-aged man who called himself Yan Zhu saved Lady and, upon obtaining their consent, brought them into Yan Ling Castle, becoming mortals of the Yan Clan fortress.

Yan Shu was only a Qi Condensation, low-status disciple in Yan Ling Castle, and his ability was limited, but he still treated both Lady Yan and her daughter very well.

After a year, Lady Yan decided to bluntly marry this person to repay him for saving them. But because Mo Caihuan's beauty was so moving, out of fear of it attracting trouble, Lady Yan decided to publicly proclaim that Mo Caihuan was a widow who had been married before. After cursing her husband to die, she entered within the castle. In this way, when Mo Caihuan had someone in her heart and wanted to genuinely marry someone, she could give up her surname to whomever she chose.

Lady Yan and her daughter actually lived two peaceful years inside the castle. Unfortunately, Yan Zhu was involved in an accident while carrying out a mission for the clan and was buried in a foreign land. Suddenly, Lady Yan and her daughter had no one to rely on, nor could they leave the castle. They could only continue to depend solely on Yan Ling Castle and use their pension of spirit stones to start up a small shop, doing whatever bleak business they could.

As long as they continued like this, although the store's income was not great, it was enough to allow Lady Yan to see a doctor and buy medicine and keep the illness repressed. However, the store that always sent their store low-grade talismans suddenly became inaccessible to them, causing Lady Yan's small store to be on the verge of collapse.

What kind of person was Lady Yan? She immediately saw through the core issue of the situation. After analyzing the

situation, she discovered the person who was messing with their shop behind the scenes.

As it turned out, some cultivator who lived nearby had taken a liking to Mo Caihuan after seeing the mother and daughter walk past his door often. He actually did not care about the rumors of Mo Caihuan having cursed her husband and directly proposed a request to marry Mo Caihuan. Lady Yan naturally would not agree, and so in the end, this cultivator left in a rage.

As such, the person messing with things behind the scenes naturally was ready to emerge!

When Han Li ran into Mo Caihuan on the street today, it just so happened to be when Mo Caihuan was looking for another supplier and had a large argument.

Lady Yan thoroughly and slowly spoke, while Mo Caihuan occasionally added a few sentences. Han Li roughly understood the whole story at this point! However, when hearing that Mo Caihuan was being forced to marry someone, he couldn't help but gently laugh a few times.

Who would expect that there were actually people who were willing to forcefully take the little demoness! However, this little demoness had truly grown into a big demoness in the years that he had not seen her, with a figure that could kill many people!

“Han Li, after so many years of cultivation, your cultivation should have advanced beyond the ninth layer, right?” Lady Yan

glanced over Han Li once again before politely asking. Having stayed in Yan Ling Castle over these years, although she had no way of cultivating, she knew quite a bit of common knowledge regarding the cultivation world.

“It’s decent! Martial Mother no doubt wants me to deal with this cultivator’s pestering; this person must be trouble, no?” Han Li gently laughed before straightforwardly speaking.

Hearing this, Lady Yan was somewhat embarrassed and relieved! From Han Li’s tone, it seemed that he was willing to help.

Chapter 252: Separation

“Do you know a bit about the details of this person’s cultivation? If he isn’t an important disciple or the Yan Clan and his cultivation isn’t high, I can go have a chat with him and should be able to smoothly resolve this,” Han Li calmly said as he rubbed his nose.

In fact, he clearly understood that being able to force a mortal girl required a high enough cultivation. Thus, he could only be a bit careful about this.

“I had Caihuan investigate this matter before. Apparently his fundamental cultivation had reached the fifth layer. Although his surname is Yan, he is certain to be an unimportant character of the Yan Clan. Otherwise, if he were an important disciple, why would he live among us mortals!”

Lady Yan was worthy of being the former head of the Mo Estate. Even though she had reached such dire straights, she managed to neatly arrange this matter and thoroughly understood it.

“This is of no question! In a moment, Junior Martial Sister will just have to show me the way, then I’ll go and settle this problem!” When Han Li heard this, he nodded his head and replied.

“Many thanks, Senior Martial Brother! I knew that Senior Martial Brother was certain to help!” When Mo Caihuan clearly heard this, she sweetly called out with extreme happiness.

“Han Li, we’ve truly troubled you! If we hadn’t, how else could

this mother and daughter possibly challenge a cultivator?" Gratitude flashed through Lady Yan's eyes but then she sighed and helplessly added, "Although this place appears to restrict cultivators from harassing us mortals, there are far too many counts of cultivators humiliating mortals, but how could the Yan Clan possibly punish all those cultivators! Moreover, if a mortal is not careful and actually start a feud with a cultivator, he would evaporate without a trace. This is a rather common occurrence."

Han Li had heard the unwillingness to be powerless in her words. After all, compared to the grandeur of the ultimate power grasped by the Mo Estate, their current life of swallowing their anger was, as Lady Yan had described, truly humiliating.

After Han Li heard this, he was silent for a moment, Then he asked a few questions of his misgivings.

"Master's Wife, Junior Martial Sister should have long reached a suitable age for marriage. Why hasn't she found a suitable partner within the castle yet? If she married a cultivator, wouldn't you have someone to rely on?"

"Marry?"

"I won't marry those Yan Clan cultivators!"

Just as Han Li had finished speaking, Lady Yan bitterly smiled as Mo Caihuan loudly rejected this with an entirely unhappy expression.

“Why?” Han Li was somewhat astonished.

“Senior Martial Brother! The cultivators of the Yan Clan fundamentally do not treat us mortal girls justly! If a mortal were to marry to them, she would basically be treated as a mortal slave, nothing more. It would be undesirable for any girl to be in this position since she would be beaten and scolded often. I would rather remain single for my entire life than marry!” Mo Caihuan’s voice was quick and anxious. It was clear she greatly feared this.

“Han Li, you didn’t know this but your Junior Martial Sister made a friend here, a cultivator in this castle, and was married to him. The result was not as expected. She was frequently abused, and when her appearance aged, they found an excuse to abandon her, leaving her extremely miserable! That cultivator then married again to a young pretty woman. Sigh, if only there were a good-natured cultivator like her stepfather...there are truly too few of them there. I am also unwilling to subject Caihuan to hardship. As for marrying her to a mortal, her perspective is too large, how could she possibly put them in her eyes!” Lady Yan explained Mo Caihuan’s actions.

“So it’s like that! But if that’s the case, will Junior Martial Sister never get married her entire life?” Han Li naturally asked, wrinkling his brow.

When Han Li said this, Lady Yan’s expression changed as if she wanted to say something. But after a moment of hesitation, she decided to not say it. It was unknown what Mo Caihuan was thinking since she too lowered her head and remained silent.

Then Han Li realized the atmosphere felt a bit amiss, as if...

He immediately broke the mood, saying, “Junior Martial Sister, show your Senior Martial Brother the way. Let’s resolve this matter first and talk about this later!”

“Alright!”

Mo Caihuan hesitated for a moment before agreeing. When Lady Yan saw this, she did not have any intention to oppose.

Thus, Han Li and Mo Caihuan departed from the store for the time being and went straight toward the cultivator’s residence, which was quite far away.

.....

“Senior Martial Brother, what layer is your cultivation? When you knocked on his door, it appeared to be like a mouse seeing a cat. He called you ‘Senior’ incessantly and bowed to you so many times! With that kind of respect, it was as if he saw his own ancestor.” Mo Caihuan returned to the lively bearing that Han Li remembered. On the desolate path on the way back, she continuously giggled. That was how a young twenty year-old woman should act!

When Han Li saw this, he faintly smiled and humbly answered, “It’s nothing, I was just a layer higher. According to the customs of the cultivation world, he truly should be calling me ‘Senior’!”

When Mo Caihuan heard this, happiness flashed through her eyes, and she giggled even more.

“Regardless, when I remember that funny expression when he saw me, I can’t help but laugh!”

This time, Han Li didn’t say anything and only silently smiled toward Mo Caihuan. After a moment, Mo Caihuan became shy and turned her face away, saying nothing else.

But a moment later, she said something that greatly surprised Han Li.

“Senior Martial Brother, without spiritual roots, is there truly no method to cultivate? I also want to be a cultivator like you!” Mo Caihuan turned her head toward him with a face of grief and a voice with hope.

When Han Li saw this scene, he felt slight heartache but could only remain silent. Ever since ancient times, it was impossible to cultivate without spiritual roots. This has been a constant, rigid truth of the cultivation world for hundred of thousand of years! How could he possibly have great enough ability to break this!

When Mo Caihuan saw Han Li’s expression, her originally blazing heart grew cold. She knew that this extremely capable Senior Martial Brother also to have no method for this.

She could not help but become saddened, silently falling a few steps behind Han Li. The journey slowed, and the two appeared to become quiet.

When the two weren't far away from the small shop, Han Li suddenly stopped and turned towards Mo Caihuan, saying, "I still have matters to attend to and can't return to see Martial Mother! Let's depart here. Fortunately, I will be here at Yan Ling Castle for several more days. Perhaps there will be an opportunity to see you in the future."

"What? Senior Martial Brother wants to leave now?" Mo Caihuan was startled at first but then appeared greatly disappointed.

"En, here are a few tens of spirit stones. Give them to Martial Mother to set them aside for emergencies. Right now, this is all I can do!" Han Li took out a small leather pouch from his storage pouch and handed it over to Mo Caihuan.

"Many thanks, Senior Martial Brother!" Mo Caihuan said this with a soft voice, appearing extremely feeble. Reluctance to separate appeared in her eyes.

When Han Li saw this display, he didn't know why, but he felt a peculiar pain in his heart.

After he hesitated for a moment, he took out a silver bottle and tossed out a pink pill.

“Take this. Although it won’t make you a cultivator, it will make it so your appearance will never age and you will forever stay young. This can be considered my present to you as your Senior Martial Brother!” Han Li said with a solemn expression.

“Senior Martial Brother, I...”

When Mo Caihuan heard this, she couldn’t help but be pleasantly surprised. Her desire to say the words in her heart grew stronger. However, Han Li did not let her say them. He flicked his finger and the medicine pill flew into her mouth, causing her to involuntarily swallow.

“Junior Martial Sister, I am leaving! You and Martial Mother take care of yourselves!”

When these words were spoken, Han Li faintly shook and his appearance remained for a second. He then completely disappeared.

“Senior Martial Brother!”

Mo Caihuan called out, astonished. She hurried rushed forth several steps and looked around in every direction. Could there still be any trace of Han Li?

Helpless, Mo Caihuan could only slowly walk back to the store with a saddened expression.

After a short moment, Han Li appeared in a room not too far away. After he silently looked on for a moment more, he disappeared again without hesitation.

Although Han Li was not certain what this Junior Martial Sister was going to say to him, he could make a fairly accurate guess.

But unfortunately, while they were destined to meet, they were not fated to be together! His feelings toward her had not reached that stage.

Not to mention his lifespan as a Foundation Establishment cultivator was truly far too different from her own. That was also why he was unwilling to touch these feelings. After all, powerlessly seeing the people he loved wither before his eyes was truly something Han Li found intolerable!

.....

“Heavenly Crane Residence” The name of this teahouse appeared before Han Li. It was an ancient building, three stories high. As expected, it was somewhat imposing.

With only a rough look, Han Li did not think deeper and entered. This was because he had already felt over ten vibrations of magic power within the building, all of which were on par with his own. Only cultivators on the stage of Foundation Establishment or greater could release such spiritual power.

He entered the teahouse and swept his gaze across without stopping in the slightest. Then he went up to the second floor. This was because on the first floor, there were only mortals without the slightest magic power.

Although there were a few cultivators on the second floor, the majority of them were of the Qi Condensation stage. They were fundamentally unable to enter Han Li's eyes at this moment. Han Li felt the fluctuation of magic power grow greater as he approached the third floor, Han Li's real objective.

Chapter 253: Ghost Spirit Sect

When Han Li entered the third floor, he immediately felt several spiritual senses sweep past him, causing his heart to shiver.

These investigators' magic power was of mid Foundation Establishment stage, far greater than an early Foundation Establishment cultivator such as himself. During his four years of secluded cultivation in his Immortal's cave, his magic power had approached the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but he still had yet to pierce through a paper-thin bottleneck, much to Han Li's disappointment.

However, these thoughts were rather ordinary. After all, with the speed of his four years of cultivation and having almost reached mid Foundation Establishment, he had already surpassed the speed of normal cultivators. Also, this final paper-thin bottleneck was the first he had encountered in Foundation Establishment. This was not something that could be broken through solely with medicinal assistance, but rather, it also required a certain auspicious opportunity.

If he were to just consume many different medicines, it would only deepen his magic power a bit, but he wouldn't be able to easily step over and advance through this layer.

As Han Li thought of this, he roughly understood everything on the upper floor and sized it up once through,

The people of the third floor were all Foundation Establishment

cultivators, but it was obvious that they were divided into two groups. One group was dressed in the style of the Seven Great Sect of the State of Yue. The others were disorderly dressed, marking them as foreign cultivators.

There were only five cultivators from the Seven Great Sects. They all sat at a table and were talking about something with a soft voice. They seemed to be somewhat close. As for the other cultivators, there were seven or eight, sitting alone or in pairs. They were drinking tea with cold faces and weren't whispering or talking.

With such a contrast between movement and stillness, Han Li felt an oppressive, hostile atmosphere.

Han Li's arrival naturally aroused the other cultivators' attention. Apart from the few who had examined him at the beginning, the others also turned to study him. Then, without hesitation, Han Li walked toward the table with cultivators from the Seven Great Sects. After all, he was one of them, an ally.

Han Li's movement caused the foreign cultivators to turn a blind eye to him! Then the people from the seven sects stood up and welcomed him with a faint smile.

Wearing the Yellow Maple Valley uniform, Han Li naturally did not need to say anything about it. These people were already quite familiar with it.

“This one is Yellow Maple Valley's Han Li! I see there are several

Senior Martial Brothers and Sisters!” Han Li bowed. Of the five before him, three were actually mid Foundation Establishment and the other two were early Foundation Establishment like himself.

“Junior Martial Brother Han! This one is the Clear Void Sect’s Wu Fazi. This is Junior Martial Brother Wu Youzi. These three are Junior Martial Brother Wu of Spirit Beast Mountain, Senior Martial Brother Ba of the Giant Sword Sect, and Junior Martial Sister of Heavenly Imperial Castle.” The eldest of the two Daoist Priests sitting at the table politely saluted him and gave him a cursory introduction.

“Since Junior Martial Brother has come, first sample the Yan Clan’s famed Snowbell Tea! This teahouse specializes in providing top-grade goods for us external cultivators!” Cultivator Wu of Spirit Beast Mountain was a cheerful middle-aged man. Once Han Li sat down, he immediately took the teapot and poured Han Li a cup of cloudy white spiritual tea.

Han Li nodded with a smile in response and then took a light sip.

Regardless of whether this person had sincerely poured tea for him, their appearances were convincing.

“Good tea!” Not paying particular attention to these people, Han Li could not help but praise the tea.

As the tea went down, he immediately a slight cold chill rise from his stomach. The tea had left a strong lingering fragrance throughout his mouth.

When Cultivator Wu heard this, his smile grew slightly stronger.

“Junior Martial Brother Han’s appearance is rather unfamiliar. Are you a newly accepted brilliant disciple of a Yellow Maple Valley Martial Senior?” The twenty year-old Junior Martial Sister Fang with a common appearance calmly asked.

“My master is Li Huayuan. I was formally accepted as his disciple upon achieving Foundation Establishment. My age is but a few trifling years! I hope Senior Martial Brothers and Sister will give me a pointer of two!” Han Li responded with a sincere expression.

“How could we possibly talk about giving pointers! Everyone mutually exchanges a pointer or two with one another. Since Junior Martial Brother Han was able to become Martial Senior Li’s disciple and was even dispatched to this location when you were so young, you are certain to be outstanding. There is no need to undervalue yourself so much!” The one speaking this time was the middle-aged man from the Giant Sword Sect. Although he appeared sincere and considerate, the words coming out of his mouth revealed none of that, leaving Han Li somewhat surprised.

Han Li naturally said a few more modest words. As such, apart from that thin, short and silent Wu Youzi, Han Li and the others broke into an excited discussion.

“What were you talking about just now?” After a few more niceties, Han Li steered toward this topic, asking as he wished.

“It was nothing! We were guessing the reason as to why so many cultivators from foreign countries had come to Yan Lin Castle. This is truly unusual! Although the Yin Yang Pagoda is very precious, it’s certainly not this attractive.” When Wu Fazi heard Han Li’s question, he answered with a solemn expression.

These words dispelled Han Li’s doubts. He could not help but repeatedly nod in agreement.

“We made a few comments about it a moment ago but weren’t able to come to a conclusion.”

“We all felt that the odds of an outstanding treasure appearing in this area were not high. Because if this were the case, not only would there be Foundation Establishment cultivators, Core Formation stage experts would have already long arrived and wouldn’t be nearly as peaceful. As for their true reasons, we have no way of knowing,” said the Fang woman from Heavenly Imperial Castle.

“We shouldn’t have careless suspicions. Surely in two days, on the start of the Treasure Seizing Assembly, everything will be made known. I actually feel a bit uneasy toward the Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators who arrived today. Overall, I feel that these people are of the wrong sort! They actually repeatedly beat down the disciples of the Yan Clan and truly cause too much mishap. Do any of you know their origins?” The middle-aged man named Wu asked with a wrinkled brow. His chuckling smile could no longer be seen; it seems he was truly felt great unease toward these cultivators.

Cultivator Wu's question immediately caused this group of cultivators to look at each other in dismay!

This was the first time they had heard of this sect, but how could they be a righteous group with that name of theirs? They most likely tread the Devil Dao. Nobody knew whether they were a sect from a nearby country, but regardless, they were able to cause a local powerhouse like the Yan Clan to be afraid of the consequences and remain timid even after they injured so many of their disciples. It seemed their aggressive arrogance knew no end.

The majority's expression had changed except for that of Wu Youzi, who had yet to speak. Only his expression hadn't changed. It seemed he knew something of this Ghost Spirit Sect, causing everyone to be somewhat expectant.

“Junior Martial Brother, do you know of this Ghost Spirit Sect?” Wu Fazi asked with great surprise. His Junior Martial Brother had never been fond of interacting with others, but he did enjoy flipping through all sorts of books. Perhaps he truly knew a thing or two!

“The Ghost Spirit Sect, one of the six sects of the State of Tian Luo. They are experts on controlling ghosts and enslaving demons. They are also proficient in poisonous techniques and a few dark techniques. Although they are the weakest of the six sects, they are more powerful and wealthier than the strongest sect in the State of Yue, the Masked Moon Sect.”

After Wu Youzi raised his head and coldly said this, he once again turned silent. However, these few words were enough to cause

everyone's expression to greatly change.

“A Devil Sect of the State of Tian Luo? No wonder the Yan Clan submitted themselves to humiliation! They are absolutely several times more powerful than our own seven sects. In our region, apart from the Righteous Dao Alliance of the State of Feng Du, no other country's cultivators would have the power to resist an invasion from them.” The man from the Giant Sword Sect turned pale as he mentioned this.

“We can't make a mistake about this. How would a great power suddenly come to our State of Yue and participate in such a small Treasure Seizing Assembly?” the Fang woman asked, not daring to be fully convinced. Her words naturally carried some doubt.

“《Heavenly South Letter》 Second Scroll, Article Four!” Wu Youzi spoke with a cold voice.

“Ah...” The female cultivator didn't understand at first, but after a moment, she understood his meaning.

Every great sect had a set of ancient records, in particular about the customs and relationships of every country, as well as a few fantastic tales and interesting anecdotes; they also touched quite a bit on the affairs of the cultivation world. However, because there was far too much, the female cultivator had only hurriedly looked through a few books before she became disinclined to look further. Could it be that the matters of the Ghost Spirit Sect could be found in these records?

She wasn't the only one. The others also expressed doubt. Wu Youzi then reluctantly said, "On the second scroll, not only does it detail the Ghost Spirit Sect but it also roughly introduces the other five sects of Tian Luo!"

From Wu Youzi's certain appearance, the others were convinced of his words. This time, apart from being shocked, the others began to ponder as to why the Ghost Spirit Sect suddenly appeared at the Yan Clan. Han Li habitually massaged his temples and sunk into deep thought.

The State of Tian Luo's six sects intended to invade the State of Yue?

No, that's not right. The States of Yue and Tian Luo were separated by two small countries, the States of Che Ji and Jiang. Before invading the State of Yue, they must first invade these two small countries.

Although these two countries are small, the strength of their cultivation worlds was not small at all. If they were to join with the seven sects of the State of Yue, it would be extremely difficult for the six Devil Dao sects to silently and easily invade the two countries.

Besides, the nearby Righteous Dao Alliance of the State of Feng Du would look upon them with a careful eye! Surely they wouldn't give them the opportunity to expand their strength.

After Han Li thought it through, Han Li ruled out the most

terrible situation!

Chapter 254: Yan Clan Ancestor

Could it be that the Ghost Spirit Sect was moving by itself, independently from the other five Devil Dao sects? If this were the case, the Righteous sects wouldn't need to fear much. Even the Yan Clan had the power to deal with the people of the Ghost Spirit Sect. After all the Yan Clan had many Core Formation cultivators on guard!

After Han Li thought of this, he felt a bit more at ease.

Even if the heavens were to truly fall upon them, those of high status would go to stop it! Whatever shady business the Ghost Spirit Sect had, what did it have to do with a trifling Foundation Establishment disciple such as himself? Let the Yan Clan deal with it! He only had to be a bit careful; after all, the fires that harm the gates affect the fish in the pond.

(TL: Disaster can affect those who aren't targeted)

He didn't know whether the others shared his thoughts. After a moment of fear, their expressions gradually become normal. Unexpectedly, no one further raised the subject. Instead, they chatted a bit about experiences and questions with regards to cultivation. All of this greatly interested Han Li, and he instantly joined in the discussion.

Time passed very quickly and the sky gradually darkened. The group had their fair share of talking, and the foreign cultivators left not long ago; it was time to bid farewell.

Their exchange of experiences left them with no small amount of gains, especially the means and opportunities used to make a breakthrough by the mid Foundation Establishment cultivators! This alone made this trip worth it for Han Li and the other early Foundation Establishment cultivators.

The middle-aged man surnamed Wu, who clearly wished for this discussion to continue, raised the topic of another meeting. Tomorrow, several of them would meet at a remote location and continue on with their long chat. Furthermore, they would also be holding a small-scale exchange of goods. How could this not be a wonderful opportunity!

This suggestion received everyone's approval; Han Li naturally did not oppose.

Thus, the discussion was complete, and they left one by one.

Han Li then marked an inn that he passed by on his map. This inn specialized in receiving external cultivators.

This inn was located in the southeast corner of Yan Ling Castle. The rather unremarkable inn wasn't very large. It was clearly inferior to other inns, so not many cultivators went there.

Despite of this, Han Li sought this place because it was peaceful and less popular. Because there were fewer people, the odds of getting tied up into trouble was also smaller. Furthermore, the close proximity to the city walls meant that Han Li could easily

escape if any mishap occurred!

After all, the appearance of the cultivators from the Ghost Spirit Sect had left Han Li uneasy. Making preparations for the unexpected in advance was a practice he often used to be careful.

This “Pleased Wind Tavern” didn’t have many cultivators as expected. It also wasn’t lively, and the people staying there were reclusive. Han Li got his own room without anyone making a fuss, much to his satisfaction. He immediately found a clean spot in his room to sit down.

As for where that Dong Xuan’er was staying, Han Li did not care to look for her. After all, by the time the Treasure Seizing Assembly started, he would be certain to see her. When the time came, he only had to return to Yellow Maple Valley! As Han Li thought this, he fell into a deep sleep.

During the night, while many cultivators started to sleep or sat in meditation to refine Qi, at the tallest building in Yan Ling Tower, inside the heavily guarded room inside the “Wind Cloud Pavilion”, the command center of Yan Ling Castle, there was a red-haired old man who paced back and forth with both hands behind his back and a deadpan expression.

Not far from him stood three gray-robed old men wearing extremely respectful expressions.

“Zi Jun, those Ghost Spirit Sect youngsters truly wanted to come see me this night?” The red-haired elder eventually stopped pacing

and faintly looked at the elder in the middle.

“That is right, Venerable Ancestor! After the young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect concluded the martial competition, he told me this in private!” This person respectfully answered.

“En!” The red-haired elder expressionlessly nodded his head, but radiance flashed through his eyes.

At this moment, a black-robed middle-aged man walked in and saluted, saying, “Venerable Ancestor, Elders, the guest has arrived! We have already arranged the great hall, but his two bodyguards have said they are unwilling to wait outside the hall. A few guards tried to force them out, but instead they wouldn’t budge; it seems at least one of them is at Core Formation. How do we deal with it? Venerable Ancestor, please give us clear instructions!”

“Core Formation cultivator? That’s not odd at all! Without a bodyguard for a grand young sect master, how could that Ghost Spirit Sect Master feel at ease with him coming here! Let us go and see! I actually was curious to see what this young sect master looks like underneath his mask for quite a while; it turned out to be a sneaky ghost.” After the red-haired elder heard the black-robed man’s report, a trace of a scowl appeared on his face as he unpleasantly said this.

Afterwards, he took the initiative to walk out the room, and the others naturally followed closely behind him.

Upon entering the main hall, the red-haired elder saw a lanky

youth wearing a silver devil mask. He was completely still, sitting in the guest seat.

There stood two green-robed men behind him. One of them had a face with many layers of wrinkles and a head of white hair. He couldn't have looked older. The other was a boy with white teeth, red lips, and two pigtailed on his head.

At the center of the hall, there were seven or eight black clothed cultivators lying unconscious on the floor, each with a face filled with black Qi.

“Who am I to compare? So it turned out to be the renowned Brother Li. It is no wonder that you do not put my Yan Clan into your eyes.” When the red-haired elder saw the two green-robed men, his pupils slightly shrunk, but he still remained expressionless as he said this.

He walked over to the master's seat, pulled up the sleeves of his jacket, and sat down. He then lightly clapped his hands two times. Several black-clothed men walked into the hall, wordlessly dragging out the unconscious men.

“Hehe, who would've thought that our brother's reputation would be so large. Everyone knows of the Yan Clan's Venerable Ancestor! Zeze! We are truly honored to have you as our brother! However, right now us two brothers are responsible for protecting the young master, who is carrying out the Master's affairs! If you have any business, Senior Brother Yan, please discuss it with our young master.” After boy with the innocent appearance smiled, he spoke with a coarse voice like a broken gong. The Yan Clan guards

that heard this were greatly startled.

(TL: Zeze is the sound of him clicking his tongue)

When the red-haired elder heard what he said, his heart shivered. He had heard of the impressive reputation of these two devils. With this said, it seems this young master was not a simple character. His gaze then fell on the silver-masked youth.

After sizing him up for a moment, he insipidly asked, “You are the young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect? Why do you wear a mask? Could it be you have something shameful to hide?”

“You are wrongly blaming this Junior. This Junior wears a mask for other, more difficult, reasons, not because of something shameful. If Senior truly wishes to see, then this Junior will naturally take off his mask and let Senior take a look,” the young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect said with a faintly cheerful voice. His words were neither humble nor arrogant.

“Humph! What is so good about a man’s appearance? This old man has no such inclinations! Why did your people from the Ghost Spirit Sect suddenly come to our Yan Clan from so far away? Furthermore, you’ve clearly shown you wanted to meet with me. My people have arrived as you have seen. Just say whatever superfluous words you prepared as you wish. This old man no longer has the patience to deal with you much longer.” After the Yan Clan’s Ancestor looked at the young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect indifferently, he ruthlessly said this, layering his words with a hostility that matched his loftiness.

“Hehe, since Senior Yan has said as such, this Junior will not beat around the bush and speak bluntly. My Lord Father wished for this Junior to deliver a letter to Senior. He also wished for Junior to say two words for Senior to hear.” Even when the young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect saw how the Yan Clan Ancestor treated him, he still remained calm and poised.

“What letter! I have never seen your father before. What’s more is that the Yan Clan and your Ghost Spirit Sect never had such friendly relations. What letter needs to be delivered to this old man? You even want to tell me two words in secret. Are you playing with me?” Old Yan looked at Brother Li for a moment and saw he hadn’t moved in the slightest.

The Yan Clan Ancestor found it hard to truly believe this was the Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master.

Naturally, Brother Li saw the doubts of the Yan Clan’s ancestor and looked at him with a smile. He then made no further movements.

At this moment, the Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master took out a jade slip he had on hand, stood up, and walked several steps forwards, but the Yan Clan Ancestor remained sitting and didn’t have an intention of holding out his hand to receive it. Instead, after he took a look at the jade slip, he said extremely coldly, “I will see this letter later. First say those two words of yours! After this old man hears them, I will decide whether or not I want to look at the letter!”

When the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master heard those words, he didn't move. Instead, he sighed behind his mask and slightly moved his lips, spitting out the two words for the old man to hear.

Although those from the Yan Clan could not hear those two words, after the Yan Clan Ancestor heard them, his body suddenly stirred. Letting out a deep breath, he stood from his chair; his expression extremely dark.

“Give me the letter, then follow me to a private room!” After a moment of uncertainty, the red-haired old man said this with fierce resolution.

Thus, in the presence of many Yan Clan Disciples, the Yan Clan Ancestor brought the young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect to a private room covered with layers of restriction spells.

However, the two Core Formation Cultivators who had accompanied him stayed outside. The slightest of unease could not be seen. It was as if they had full confidence in the security of the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master.

All of them waited through the entire night.

Chapter 255: Secret Meeting

Han Li glanced at the expert's pill formula before him and wrinkled his eyebrows, speechless.

This was the second afternoon since Han Li had arrived at Yan Ling Castle.

After participating in a fervent discussion with some newly joined members from morning till noon, the ten or so cultivators from their various sects within the room began to exchange for items that they each needed. Every person took turns listing what items they required and what items they were willing to trade to see whether or not there were other cultivators present willing to exchange.

In fact, even in this kind of a small-scale exchange meeting, there were a few cultivators who took out some high-quality items.

For example: the woman from the Heavenly Imperial Fortress surnamed Fang pulled out a Heavenly Flower Stone. This was the best material to refine a top-grade earth attribute magic tool. It could also be used to refine average earth attribute magic treasures.

Another new addition, a cultivator from Spirit Beast Mountain, pulled out the egg of an advanced grade one demonic beast, Whistling Wind Eagle. After it hatched, it would be a rather useful assistant to a cultivator, capable of both acting as a sentry and searching for objects.

The items the other people took out, although they were not as impressive as the previous two, were materials and items that would be quite hard to find in a market city.

Among all of these items, Han Li actually did find a medicinal herb necessary to refine the Spirit Gathering Pill; this exceeded Han Li's expectations, causing him to excitedly exchange it for seven or eight elementary high-grade talismans. Of course, as its age was not sufficient, he would need to return to mature it. However, this trade left both sides grinning from ear to ear.

When it was Han Li's turn to speak, he bluntly brought out his own elementary high-grade talismans for trade. He mentioned the medicine ingredients he was lacking for the two medicine pills, and after a moment of hesitation, he also mentioned that all sorts of pill formulas were available for trade.

Han Li was not able to acquire all the materials required for the ancient pill formulas, but it was only natural since they were rarely seen. The majority of these cultivators had never even heard the names of the materials Han Li listed. Although a few had heard one or two of those names before, they had none of those materials on hand. As for pill formulas, these cultivators naturally would not exchange them for talismans. They all knew that Han Li had said it without much thought.

Han Li, seeing that he had talked for a long time, yet no one stepped forwards to make an exchange, knew that he didn't have much hope. Thus, he disappointedly decided to sit back down when all of a sudden, someone unexpectedly opened his mouth and

said:

“Are you accepting all pill formulas? I have a pill formula here, but it’s somewhat strange. Can you take a look and judge how many talismans it can be exchanged for?”

Hearing this, Han Li became happy in his heart, and without thinking any further, he opened his mouth and said:

“Of course it’s fine! As long as it’s a pill formula, I am willing to make a trade.”

After this was said, Han Li took note of the person who had wanted to trade a pill formula. It was actually that cold, reclusive Daoist Priest, Wu Youzi.

After Wu Youxi heard Han Li’s words, the trace of a rarely-seen smile appeared on his face. Then he took out an azure jade slip and gave it to Han Li. When the other cultivators saw that there was someone who had exchanged a pill formula for talismans, they couldn’t help but whisper for quite some time with astonished appearances.

Wu Youzi’s Senior Martial Brother Wu Fazi then unexpectedly turned a blind eye and closed his eyes to rest.

After Han Li scanned through the pill formula, he somewhat understood why Wu Youzi had taken it out to exchange with him.

This was actually an ancient pill formula. Not only that, but a pill used by ancient cultivators specialized in raising spirit beasts, the “Spirit Feed Pill”. According to what was written on the formula, not only did a majority of demonic beasts greatly love to eat it, but after prolonged consumption, it would have the wondrous effect of promoting the spirit beast’s grade. It was the optimal medicine pill to nurture spirit beasts.

Seeing this, Han Li was startled! How could this cultivator trade such a valuable pill formula? But when Han Li took a look at the materials required for refining it, he suddenly mocked himself. Now he knew why the other party didn’t value this formula in the least.

For average cultivators, the materials required to refine the “Spirit Feed Pill” were truly astonishing. It required nearly as many precious and rare materials as Han Li’s own “Qi Refining Powder”.

As for the materials that were hard to gather, even if one gathered enough of these rare materials, who would use them to refine this “Spirit Feed Pill”? Naturally, a cultivator would keep the materials for use on his own body; after all, the progression of one’s own magic power was more important than that of a spirit beast.

“Benefactor, you said that any pill formula is fine. You can’t go back on your word!” Although this lanky Daoist Priest showed a trace of shrewdness, the originally honest and sincere impression he had given Han Li caused Han Li to bitterly smile.

However, while this pill formula was of not use to others, it held obvious value to Han Li. Naturally he wouldn't let it slip by.

Han Li lowered his head in thought. He then took out ten elementary high-grade talismans from his storage pouch and gave them to the Daoist Priest. This should be enough to satisfy him; after all, common cultivators would have regarded this recipe as trash, else this Daoist Priest would have long traded it with Spirit Beast Mountain instead of keeping it among his possessions to this day.

As expected, Wu Fazi took the talismans and did not speak further, satisfied.

After Han Li sat down, a cultivator immediately stood up and said somewhat impatiently, "I have iron wood, aged a few several hundred years. This..."

The trade for this item caused the room's atmosphere to become even more fervent!

Meanwhile, inside the Yan Clan's Wind Cloud Pavilion's official hall, a secret clan assembly had convened.

All of the stewards and elders who held power all sat down in two rows, attentively listening to the Yan Clan Ancestor. Beside the Yan Clan Ancestor stood an absolutely peerlessly stunning woman who appeared seventeen or eighteen years of age, beautiful as a fairy should be.

“The Ghost Spirit Sect raised conditions for the Yan Clan’s return. They are rather generous. Not only will they lend us the 《Thousand Spirit Sutras》 to the Yan Clan, but they will also promise that a person from our Yan Clan will serve as their deputy sect master. Their only request is that Yan’er must marry their young sect master and pair cultivate the Great Blood Spirit Arts with him. Furthermore, the position of the Yan Clan Master must be succeeded by their children. Naturally, the position of the Ghost Spirit Sect Master must also be succeeded.similarly.” The Yan Clan Ancestor calmly said this. Although his voice wasn’t very loud, it had clearly reached everyone’s ear, as if he were speaking right next to them.

(TL: The Yan 燕 of the Yan Clan and the name of the girl Yan’er 焉 have the same sound but are written differently.)

“Everyone, speak. What path should our Yan Clan proceed? You should all know that our late Yan Clan ancestors were originally cultivators from the Ghost Spirit Sect who were at discord with other cultivators within the sect and established our estate in the State of Yue. The current Ghost Spirit Sect Master can be regarded as my Martial Nephew. Because of this, everyone shouldn’t have any misgivings on those sentiments. Focus and consider only the benefits and losses to our Yan Clan.”

“Furthermore, the Ghost Spirit Sect’s Young Master brought some information. The Six Devil Sects of the State of Tian Luo will invade the State of Yue in five days. The States of Jiang and Che Ji already surrendered half a month ago, and most of the two country’s sects have been extinguished. The small portion that surrendered has become subordinate sects to the Six Devil Sects. Thus, even if our Yan Clan doesn’t agree to the Ghost Spirit Sect’s

conditions, we must consider what happens after the Seven Sects of the State of Yue are extinguished and how our Yan Clan will survive. This is the problem that should be at the forefront of our consideration.”

Without waiting for the rest of the Yan Clan to address the previous question, the Yan Clan Ancestor threw out an even more astonishing matter, causing everyone to madly comment on it.

“What?! The cultivation worlds of the States of Jian and Che Ji have already been taken over? This is impossible!”

“The strength of those two countries isn’t weak at all! How could they fall against the Six Sects of the Devil Dao without years of resistance? How could you speak of them falling?”

“How could they have won so quickly? Could it be there is something greater at play? A secret?”

Clearly, those who held power in the Yan Clan found it hard to believe this information.

“Enough! Those with questions should ask them one by one. How could we possibly move forward with all this ruckus?” When the Yan Clan Martial Ancestor saw this, he answered with a cold expression.

After these words were spoken, the ruckus in the large hall was immediately silenced. Then all the gazes focused onto a middle-

aged Confucian Scholar sitting to the right of the red haired-elder.

When the Yan Clan Ancestor clearly saw the situation, he wrinkled his brow and amiably said to the Confucian Scholar, “Xuan Ye, how do you see things? You are the source of wisdom for our Yan Clan. These matters relate to the life and death of the Yan Clan; please analyze them with all your heart!”

“Yes, Venerable Ancestor!” The Confucian Scholar didn’t dare to be negligent and hastily replied.

“However, can this descendant first ask a few questions before saying anything else?”

“Yes, of course you can! Do not hesitate to ask any questions you have! I will say all that I know,” the Yan Clan Ancestor solemnly pledged.

After receiving the Yan Clan Ancestor’s reply, the Confucian Scholar nodded his head and solemnly asked, “First of all, is the might of this Great Blood Spirit Arts very great? Also, how will niece’s heavenly spiritual roots affect the cultivation of this technique after she pair cultivates with their young master? Secondly, how did they find our Yan Clan and know that we originally came from the Ghost Spirit Sect? Lastly, were they the only ones who informed Venerable Ancestor of the occupation of the Six Devil Dao Sects in the States of Jiang and Che Ji? If this is true, shouldn’t the Righteous Dao Alliance of the State of Feng Du be hurrying to respond?”

In a single breath, the Confucian Scholar asked three questions...

Chapter 256: Conspiracy

When the Yan Clan Ancestor heard the Confucian Scholar ask only the crucial points, he couldn't help revealing an expression of admiration and surprise. He then replied:

“Great Blood Spirit Arts. Although our late Yan Clan ancestors did not carry this cultivation art, this letter seems to think extremely highly of this cultivation art, praising it as the number one devil art of the《Thousand Spirit Sutras》. After refining it, one could even take a leading role in the Six Sects of the Devil Dao. It could also be said to be one of the most fearsome secret techniques. However, this technique is far too overbearing. In order to prevent any accidental harm, a man and a woman must pair cultivate it. It is also extremely important that their spiritual roots be of sufficient quality. If they are not, then it can only be cultivated to the second or third layer at the very most, simply nothing worthy of note. Thus, if one had captivating heavenly spiritual roots, they would absolutely become an ideal partner for pair cultivation. This young master of the Ghost Spirit Sect happens to have extremely rare dark spirit roots, an ideal partner for cultivating the Great Blood Spirit Arts. If he and his partner had ideal peak aptitudes and truly cultivated the Great Blood Spirit Arts, they could cultivate this art to its very deepest and be put at the forefront of the six sects. As a result, this Ghost Spirit Sect did not hesitate to rope us in, even risking telling us information on the eve of the invasion of the State of Yue to secure the opportunity for the Ghost Spirit Sect to be proclaimed hegemon of the entire Heavenly South Region.”

“As for how they knew of the history of the Yan Clan, there is an even better explanation. Before our ancestors passed away, they already established contact with the Ghost Spirit Sect. I suppose it

was at that time that our Yan Clan was brought to their attention. As for Yan'er, it's likely they have conspired for quite some time, all in order to take advantage of this golden opportunity and have our Yan Clan agree to this matter with both incentive and force." After the Yan Clan Ancestor said this, he bitterly smiled. It was clear that their late ancestors' rash contact with the Ghost Spirit Sect had left them without much choice.

"Also, on the matter of the invasion of the Six Devil Dao Sects, they were the ones who told me. But as for the seizure of the States of Jiang and Che Ji, our Yan Clan noticed something amiss several days before their arrival. The men we have stationed in those two countries should have sent us regularly scheduled information by now, but we have yet to receive any message. This should verify their story. As for how they easily seized the two countries? According to their explanation, the six sects had already bribed many members of the two country's sects and clans in advance. As a result, with an ambush of formidable strength and the aid of several traitors, the two countries fell in one blow. Right now, the six sects should be purging the remnants who refused to pay allegiance. As for using us to prepare for the invasion of the State of Yue, this is naturally to avoid taking greater losses."

"As for the Righteous Dao Alliance in the State of Feng Du, you can't hope to count on them. Not long before this meeting, I received information that the Righteous Dao Alliance had already invaded a neighbouring mid-class country and nearly seized all of it. It seems certain that these two great powers already made a deal under the table and have thus started their large-scale expansion operations."

The Yan Clan Ancestor clearly listed explanations one after

another. Those who heard this were shocked!

“The Devil and Righteous Dao have simultaneously started to expand their influence? Hehe, if this is true, it is rather amusing!” After the Confucian Scholar listened to the Yan Clan Ancestor’s answers, he said a few thought-provoking words with a smile.

“Xuan Ye, what meaning do your words carry?” A white-haired Confucian Scholar sitting across from him impatiently asked.

“Second Uncle! It is nothing, merely a guess of mine. This guess has nothing to do with our Yan Clan. Let's talk about the situation of our Yan Clan first!” The Confucian Scholar responded, shaking his head and waving it off as he wished.

“Humph!” The old man was met with a tactful rejection and resentfully glared at the Confucian Scholar. But in front of the Yan Clan Ancestor, he could only angrily sit back down.

“Wo! After this meeting, can I hear this small guess of yours?” The Yan Clan Ancestor asked with some interest.

“If Venerable Ancestor wishes to hear, Xuan Ye naturally won’t hide it from you.” When the Confucian Scholar saw this, he hastily bowed and respectfully replied.

“Good! However, let's first talk about the matter before us. If we were to make a wrong choice about this, it’s not a matter of not being annexed; it’s a matter of offending them and enduring a clan

extermination under the combined might of the six sects.” A trace of helplessness was revealed in the red-haired elder’s words. After all, while the Yan Clan’s power wasn’t too weak, even with the addition of their hidden strength, they wouldn’t be able to put up the slightest resistance.

“En! Venerable Ancestor is correct. Currently, the Yan Clan must fear both ends! If we agree, they might take the opportunity to swallow us whole. If we refuse, then their strength will be far too great and will bring upon us endless trouble!” The Confucian Scholar wore an expression of contemplation.

“Even so, my opinion is that we should still agree to their conditions and enter the Ghost Spirit Sect!” The Confucian Scholar eventually gave a firm answer.

Without waiting for the slightest of opposition from the Yan Clan, he continued,

“Everyone has thought about it from the very start. If we refuse their conditions, what sort of fearsome consequences would occur? But did everyone think about whether we could exhort enough benefits out of the seven sects by refusing the Ghost Spirit Sect? To the best of my knowledge, it seems we currently have good relations with the seven sects. But secretly, they are scared that the power of our Yan Clan will further grow and threaten their interests. Thus in the recent years, they have already indistinctly suppressed us in all areas. Even if we don’t agree to the Ghost Spirit Sect’s conditions and leak the information of the Devil Dao invasion to the seven sects, it is quite possible we wouldn’t be able to fish for any advantages. After all, the resources of the State of

Yue have long been divided between the seven sects. How could they spit out things for our Yan Clan? Furthermore, during the six sect's invasion of the State of Yue, even if the seven sects of the State of Yue were able to acquire the assistance of cultivators from other countries to resist the Devil Dao, their chances of victory aren't very high. Clinging to victory is our Yan Clan's path to survival. After all, the loser would be incapable of honoring its promise."

"Equivalently, agreeing to the Ghost Spirit Sect doesn't come with just harm. We should also be aware of the benefits! Setting aside the benefits of Yan'er learning the Great Blood Spirit Arts and the position as deputy sect master, becoming a member of the Ghost Spirit Sect is a golden opportunity to expand the influence of the Devil Dao! As such, after the Yan Clan joins with them, we will be able to openly and brazenly expand our influence as well. Of course, we must be careful so we aren't considered weapons by the Ghost Spirit Sect and consume our manpower in vain. As long as we can expand the power of the Yan Clan until we can reach equal footing with the Ghost Spirit Sect, they will naturally be unable to annex us. If our power becomes far greater than their own, then perhaps we may have the Ghost Spirit Sect be named 'Yan'!"

The Confucian Scholar said all of this frankly and with confidence, describing the prospect of a beautiful future and rousing the spirits of quite a few people.

Naturally there were a few old men who still felt incomparably uneasy. After all, how could the Ghost Spirit Sect have any good intentions towards them and sincerely give them the time to gradually strengthen themselves?

However, the Confucian Scholar's next words wiped away their doubts.

“Naturally, we can't leave ourselves too vulnerable. We don't have a single means of restricting them! If the other party truly wanted to have us submit to them, then let's have that young sect master and the two Core Formation cultivators accompanying him along with Ruyan and two elders exchange a life and death curse. Thus, they wouldn't be able to harm our Yan Clan for at least two to three hundred years. During this time, our Yan Clan will be able to greatly expand its influence. If the Ghost Spirit Sect doesn't agree to this measure, then we fundamentally cannot rely on the other party's goodwill. This would prove all of your previous doubts, that this was merely a trap for our Yan Clan.” The Confucian Scholar provided a method to authenticate the other side's sincerity. The Ancestor and others who listened repeatedly nodded their heads; they felt this method was very reliable.

“Yan'er, Yan Wen, Yan Ji! All of you go to the Ghost Spirit Sect's guest room and sign a life and death contract with them. If they do not agree, immediately activate the great formation inside the hall and trap them there.” After the Yan Clan Ancestor closed his eyes to think for a moment, he opened his eyes and gave his command.

“We follow your orders, Venerable Ancestor!”

The young girl next to the Yan Clan Ancestor sweetly smiled and gracefully walked to the front of the hall, accepting her orders. She was accompanied by two middle-aged men.

“Yan'er, be careful. If something is amiss, you should first

escape. I will arrange for elders to provide support from outside the hall!” The Yan Clan Ancestor clearly doted in this young Yan Clan girl, so much so that great concern was shown on his face.

“Be at ease, Venerable Ancestor! I have the protection of the Violet Cloud Flag, so I’ll definite escape should any danger show up!” The young woman adorably comforted him and walked out of the hall with the two middle-aged men.

As the old red-haired man saw his most favored female descendant walk out, he still felt uneasy. Then without taking the time to think, he issued a series of commands and laid out an inescapable net surrounding the guest hall in order to rescue Ruyan if needed and prevent the other party from escaping.

Inside the official hall, there was a tranquil atmosphere. All those within were waiting with anxiety for the return of Ruyan and the other two.

After the time it took an incense stick to burn, a voice transmission talisman suddenly flew into the official hall and headed directly toward the Yan Clan Ancestor’s hand. The Ancestor lightly pinched the sound transmission talisman, and Yan Ruyan’s sweet voice was heard.

“Venerable Ancestor, the matter has concluded. The other party agreed to the contract that the two Senior Martial Uncles and I proposed. The life and death contract was performed smoothly. I am currently keeping the other party company in the main hall. Because the other party still wishes to further speak to Venerable Ancestor, I request that Venerable Ancestor prepare.”

When the Yan Clan Ancestor and other Yan Clan members heard that the life and death contract was successful, they all let out a sigh of relief. But when they heard that the other party wished to come to the main hall, everyone stared.

“Everyone is immediately dismissed! Only Xuan Ye will remain here with me!” The Yan Clan Ancestor muttered to himself for a moment before firmly giving his command.

At his command, the various elders and stewards within the hall immediately dispersed.

Chapter 257: Blood Sacrifices And A Glamorous Male

The Yan Clan Ancestor and Confucian Scholar both waited for a while before the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master and Yan Ruyan walked into the debate hall.

“Since my Yan Clan has already agreed to an alliance with your esteemed sect, does young sect master have any other comments?” When the Yan Clan's Martial Ancestor opened his mouth again, he was obviously much milder; clearly, he was avoiding the fact that the Yan Clan would be a subordinate of the Ghost Spirit Sect in the future.

“Why does Elder Yan need to act so ceremoniously? Since Ruyan and I are now under a life and death oath, this can be considered our wedding contract! Elder Yan, in the future you can just call me Wang Chan; you don't have to call me young sect master!” Wang Chan said as gracefully as the wind after gently bowing in greeting.

“How can this be allowed? You and Ruyan'er have yet to wed each other, so how can I be so disrespectful to the young sect master? After all, the Yan clan now is about to become a branch of the Ghost Spirit Sect,” the Yan Clan Martial Ancestor expressionlessly refuted, shaking his head and twirling the short beard hairs on his chin.

Hearing the Yan Clan's Martial Ancestor speak like that, the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master knew that the other person's wariness towards him had not been completely dispelled yet; thus, he didn't force the issue and laughed, then said:

“In reality, the reason why Wang Chan asked Martial Ancestor to come with Miss Ruyan and meet again was because I wanted to ask how Martial Ancestor was preparing to fulfill the arrangement. After all, in five days our six sects are going to officially attack the State of Yue. At that time, if the Yan Clan doesn’t promptly leave, it will become somewhat complicated.”

“Young sect master can rest assured concerning this matter; although our Yan Clan appears to have many clan members, in reality we will abandon a few outer clan members who are too far removed from the bloodline, as well as commoners with no magic power. After all, transferring all the clan members at once is not quite realistic! The Yan Clan is very clear about this matter!” said the Confucian scholar first.

“Since Yan Clan is prepared to sacrifice, this junior now can rest assured. After all, if the Yan Clan were to move all at once, it would be impossible to not be noticed by the Seven Sects; at that time, your leaked reputation won’t be good! This individual should be the Yan Clan’s Master Xuan Ye, the ‘Hundred Divulged Secrets’. It’s an honor to meet you at last!” the young sect master of the Ghost Spirit Sect gently laughed and said as the eyes behind his mask sized up the Confucian Scholar.

The Confucian Scholar’s heart couldn’t help but tremble upon seeing that the other person had called out his name and title with one glance. However, his face still wore a calm expression.

“Junior wanting to find Martial Ancestor was not just this; I also want to know how Yan Clan is planning on handling the two

hundred Foundation Establishment cultivators currently inside the castle. Many of them are the backbone disciples of the seven sects! Since the Yan Clan must immediately leave within two days, running into them at that time would be extremely unfortunate!” said the Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master without changing expression; however, the meaning in his words caused the Yan Clan’s Martial Ancestor and the Confucian Scholar’s expressions to change.

“Young sect master’s meaning…….” The Yan Clan’s Martial Ancestor said somewhat gloomily.

“What about this? To cultivate the Great Blood Spirit Arts requires the blood sacrifice of cultivators’ souls in order to smoothly begin cultivation. What about giving us these cultivators to allow our Ghost Spirit Sect’s Shadowflame Great Formation to refine their physical bodies and leave the souls for Miss Ruyan to begin establishing her Foundation? So many thick souls of Foundation Establishment cultivators should definitely be enough for Miss to easily cultivate the first layer of the Great Blood Spirit Arts.” The Ghost Spirit Sect’s young sect master indifferently proposed an incomparably vicious idea, causing the hearts of the Confucian Scholar and Yan Clan Martial Ancestor opposite him to feel a chill.

“Absolutely not! If it were just the people of the Seven Sects, then maybe it would be fine! There are only so many people gathered here because cultivators from other states received word that we would choose a paired cultivation partner for Ruyan. Our Yan Clan definitely cannot do something that would offend everyone!” After the Confucian Scholar’s shock, he hurriedly opened his mouth and spoke, as if he were afraid that the Yan Clan’s Martial Ancestor

would actually agree to the proposition.

“Xuan Ye, you don’t have to be agitated! I haven’t become confused to that stage yet!” the Yan Clan Martial Ancestor said, waving his hand at the Confucian Scholar as his face darkened.

Then, he said coldly to the Ghost Spirit Sect’s young sect master:

“Young sect master’s idea really is a good one! But if we truly did it your way, although the world is large, there will be no place for our Yan Clan to appear ever again. The Yan Clan will not take the initiative to make a move on the invited cultivators; however, I can send someone to gather the cultivators of the seven sects in one location. As for how to deal with them and whether we can gather that many, that will depend on your ability.”

The Confucian Scholar, upon hearing the Yan Clan’s Martial Ancestor say this, let out a sigh and repeatedly agreed.

When the Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master heard this, an unhappy light flickered through his eyes, and he slowly opened his mouth to speak, somewhat dissatisfied, “These cultivator’s souls are to be used for Miss Ruyan, and the people who profit are the Yan Clan’s members, yet the Yan Clan is unwilling to provide any assistance? This behavior is too unjustifiable!”

The Yan Clan’s Martial Ancestor was startled slightly. However, the crafty him immediately said, his expression firm, “Ruyan is going to be married to young sect master soon and become young sect master’s wife. If anyone were in your position and made some

effort, this is seemingly right and proper! Of course, when our Yan Clan officially becomes part of the Ghost Spirit Sect, naturally we will not have mercy on the members of the Seven Sects. However, no matter how you say it, the Seven Sects' disciples were invited by us this time. If our Yan Clan were to make the first move, our reputation to the cultivators of other states would be unbearable. Of course, if we were to just let them go like this, it would also be somewhat improper. Thus, it's best if young sect master's men make a move; that way, our Yan Clan can excuse ourselves to the cultivators from other states. In addition, I believe that, based on the two Core Formation Experts at young sect master's sides, would be impossible for you to not capture a few tens of Foundation Establishment Cultivators?"

The Ghost Spirit Sect's young master glanced deeply at the Yan Clan Martial Ancestor before lowering his head to contemplate. After a long while, he lifted his head and glanced at Yan Ruyan, who had not opened her mouth from the very beginning, then indifferently said, "Since Martial Ancestor says it like that, then our Ghost Spirit Sect will act as the villains this time. All of these cultivators' souls can be the dowry that Wang Chan gives to Ruyan!"

"Haha! This old man will accept Young sect master's dowry for Ruyan. Ruyan, quickly pay your respects to young sect master, his dowry is no small matter!" A trace of a smile emerged on the Yan Clan's Martial Ancestor's face upon seeing that the Yan Clan would not need to make a move against the cultivators in the castle.

"Thanks for young sect master's intentions, Ruyan will remember them in her heart!" The stunning young woman gracefully stepped forwards and gently paid her respects as she

spoke sweetly. Her face's seemingly bashful, delicate appearance caused a peculiar expression to flash across the eyes of the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master.

“Miss Ruyan being able to cultivate the Great Blood Spirit Arts as soon as possible is also a good thing for Wang, so there's no need to be so polite.”

“Please, after Martial Ancestor has thought it through, tell Junior the location you are gathering the Seven Sects cultivators to, and then you can just wait for the good news. Now, Wang Chan will leave first.” The Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master politely and elegantly spoke a few sentences, then said his goodbyes, bowing the Yan Clan Ancestor.

The Yan Clan Martial Ancestor and the Confucian Scholar in the room glanced at each other with deep meaning.....

.....

Han Li felt a great headache.

All of this pain originated from the confrontation involving the three familiar people and one stranger in front of him.

The familiar people were Yan Yu and Senior Martial Brother Feng, as well as Dong Xuan'er, who was pressed against the bosom of an incomparably glamorous man.

“Glamorous”

These two words immediately were attached to this man’s figure when Han Li saw the man’s face clearly.

This man was truly too beautiful and androgynous; no doubt, his ability to hurt both men and women was extremely strong. If it weren’t for the fact that he was wearing male attire, even if one were to treat him as a great beauty, perhaps one would not feel too surprised. However, what surprised people even more was that although his appearance was so exceptional, nobody felt that he was even slightly inappropriate; everything was coordinated and decent.

If it were under normal circumstances, Yan Yu and Senior Martial Brother Feng would not have any ill feelings towards this kind of man. However, today, their eyes were almost spitting fire as they fiercely and relentlessly glared at this cultivator wearing purple clothing.

Not only was it because Dong Xuan’er was being hugged by him—most importantly, Dong Xuan’er was foolishly gazing at this stranger’s beautiful visage, a drunken expression on her face.

Han Li glanced left and right, his eyebrows tightly knitted. At the same time, he broke the silence in his heart and began to curse loudly. He only wanted to go down the nearby roads to return to the hotel after the meeting. Who knew that in such a remote alleyway he would encounter such a scene of jealousy!

Today, even if he wanted to hide, he would have no way of doing so!

After all, before leaving for Yan Ling Castle, Martial Senior Hong Fu had urged him to control Dong Xuan'er. If he didn't see her, he could have pretended to not know about Dong Xuan'er's preposterous behavior. However, now that he had run into her face to face, if he didn't ask at all, he would have no way to justify himself!

Even more, these two individuals had completely sunk beneath Dong Xuan'er's dress. When they saw him, they first froze; next, they actually ran over to him happily, wanting him to quickly pull Dong Xuan'er away from that male cultivator.

After all, no matter how they looked at it, the danger Han Li posed to them was so small it could be ignored when compared to that glamorous male. It seemed like they had selected Han Li as their last resort.

As Han Li listened to complaints of the two cultivators who had become completely upset with jealousy, he closely sized up the glamorous male and Dong Xuan'er's drunken expression.

Based on what these two said, they had accompanied Dong Xuan'er in the afternoon to a few of the most reputable stores to buy some raw materials and talismans, but who knew that in one of the stores they would happen to meet this person?

As soon as she saw that person, Dong Xuan'er immediately

became infatuated; she took the initiative to intertwine herself to the other person, and her movements became even more over-the-top. The more they saw, the more their rage increased. What caused them to almost vomit blood was that, when this person saw Dong Xuan'er wrap herself around him, he unreservedly accepted it, even going as far as having the notion of taking Dong Xuan'er away.

How could these two accept this turn of events? Thus, they blocked off this male in this small alley, wanting him to leave Dong Xuan'er behind.

But this male coldly laughed once, then said that as long as Dong Xuan'er was willing, he absolutely would not obstruct her at all. These words immediately caused the two to pitifully stand there in vain. No matter how they looked at Dong Xuan'er's expression, she had thrown herself into his arms of her own accord.

Chapter 258: Bewitchment

When Han Li more or less understood what had happened at the alley, he discovered quite a few oddities.

First of all, he was unable to see the other party's approximate age from his beautiful appearance.

From his smooth and delicate skin, he seemed to be about twenty years old. However, from his gaze and bearing, he seemed to be of about thirty or forty years of age. His facial appearance seemed to faintly display some kind of frivolousness as if he were a pompous young master.

However, he was able to see with a glance that the other party was merely at the mid Foundation Establishment stage. This was the reason Han Li dared to remain. If he were late Foundation Establishment stage, Han Li would have further considered whether or not he should be involved in such a contrived affair.

Secondly, since the moment he appeared at this place, Dong Xuan'er's detached gaze had swept past him, but still turned her head back to indulge in looking at this gorgeous man, as if Han Li had actually become a stranger. This was quite fishy!

“Who are you? Are you also be an admirer of this young lady? Let me, Tian, first say this clearly: Unless this young lady voluntarily leaves, nobody had better think of make this beauty leave my embrace.” When the gorgeous man saw that Han Li, whose appearance was unremarkable, and noticed that his cultivation

was only at early Foundation Establishment, he couldn't help but reveal an appearance of disdain. Then, after he patted Dong Xuan'er's fragrant shoulder, he said this without concern.

Despite seeing the other party show such scorn for him, the slightest of anger could not be seen on Han Li's face. During this time, his gaze repeatedly switched between this man and Dong Xuan'er, observing them. He then darkly yelled, "Who is your esteemed self? To actually use bewitchment magic on a cultivator of our seven sects, your courage is quite great!"

When he heard Han Li's words, the glamorous man's expression slightly changed, but he immediately recovered. Then he said with a smooth expression, "You are babbling nonsense. This young woman and I are together because we find each other's company pleasant. If you all do not step aside, don't blame me for mercilessly taking action!"

Yan Yu and Senior Martial Brother Feng, who had also heard Han Li's words, suddenly realized what had happened. They then aggressively surrounded the glamorous man and angrily said, "I was wondering why Dong Xuan'er would suddenly not take notice of us as if she were possessed. It turns out that a despicable fellow like you used an evil spell to bewitch her. Quickly undo your magic technique, or don't blame me for being impolite with my Violet Light Cymbals!"

"Exactly, I also thought something was amiss! How could Dong Xuan'er leave with a stranger like you without any reason. It turned out you were a sorcerer! I will teach you a lesson on behalf of Young Lady Dong!"

As Senior Martial Brother Feng and Yan Yu said this, they each took out their own magic tools, a pair of purple cymbals and a short spear, intending to use them.

Confronting the threats of an early Foundation Establishment and a mid Foundation Establishment disciple, the glamorous man's face was covered with a layer of chilliness. He coldly said, "You overestimate yourselves!"

At this moment, Han Li felt that something was not right. He unconsciously felt that this glamorous man was extremely dangerous, and thus his mind churned for a moment. He suddenly transmitted his voice loudly towards Dong Xuan'er's ear, "Dong Xuan'er! I see you are doing fine, no? Are you not afraid of Martial Senior Hong Fu confining you?"

Yan Yu and Senior Martial Brother Feng didn't sense Han Li's voice transmission in the slightest, but the glamorous man seemed to have sensed something. After he glared at Han Li, he hastily lowered his head to look at Dong Xuan'er.

At this moment, Dong Xuan'er's face revealed an expression of shock as she unexpectedly struggled fiercely to leave the gorgeous man's embrace, withdrawing several steps away. Her face then revealed a slight expression of confusion as if she had woken up from a great dream.

When Yan Yu and Senior Martial Brother Feng saw this, they were greatly exalted.

Seeing that the gorgeous man's expression had become unsightly and that he wanted to walk towards Dong Xuan'er, the two instantly reacted, stepping forward and separating the glamorous man from Dong Xuan'er. How could they possibly allow Dong Xuan'er, who had broken free with difficulty, to once again come under his evil spell!

After Dong Xuan'er's consciousness had fully recovered, she seemed to have thought of something extremely dreadful and did not dare to look at the glamorous man any further, abruptly running toward Han Li with panic. Then she hid several steps behind Han Li, thoroughly breaking away from the glamorous man's resentful gaze.

At this moment, her body was incessantly trembling, and her face wore an expression of fear. The slightest of her wicked and unruly behavior had vanished.

The gorgeous man's expression grew dark. He looked at Yan Yu and Senior Martial Feng with a malicious gaze and then finally rigidly stared at Han Li.

Seeing these three look at him with a wary expression, he knew that seizing away Dong Xuan'er today would be impossible.

By the time Dong Xuan'er's consciousness had returned, the three had tied him down and bothered him long enough for peach trees to fully blossom. Furthermore, if a fight occurred, it would attract a great number of cultivators; he did not wish to be

recognized at this place.

But ever since he was small, he had yet to let such a golden prize be snatched away from him.

With this thought, the glamorous man's face became slightly twisted. He formidably declared, "Today's matter has yet to be concluded. I will remember you three! You should all prepare yourselves!"

With that said, the glamorous man's body flashed with a rainbow radiance and turned into a red light, flying off into the distance. Only Han Li and the others remained, albeit with squinted eyes!

.....

At the Pleased Wind Tavern where Han Li was staying, Han Li and the others heard Dong Xuan'er's account of her bewitchment by the gorgeous man.

"...I did not know why, but when I met his gaze, I immediately felt my mind slip away and couldn't think of anything. All I could think of was wanting to do my utmost to win his favor, hoping he would do anything to me. It was as if... as if he were my fated master. I was unable to muster any resistance. However, this was definitely my first time seeing him. How could this have happened? I am certainly unwilling to become anybody's slave!" When Dong Xuan'er said this, her face became increasingly pale. It was obvious that the feeling of just having her body and mind controlled by that gorgeous man had caused her to feel a fear

greater than her fear of death.

Han Li and the two other males mutually looked at each other with unsightly faces and said nothing after a while. This glamorous man's bewitchment technique was far too difficult to deal with! If this magic technique were fully used on them three, they would also be unable to resist!

"Everyone, there's no need to be anxious. Although the other party's bewitchment technique was incredible, it should have no effect on us three!" Han Li leisurely said after a moment of contemplation.

"How did Junior Martial Brother Han come to have such a brilliant opinion?" When Senior Martial Brother Feng heard Han Li's words, his spirit shook.

"It's obvious. If his bewitchment technique could work on us males, do you believe he would have departed with that hateful gaze without using it on us? Perhaps he was lacking magic power and didn't have enough to use it again. However, when we were confronting him, we truly felt that his magic power was not lacking. Thus we can believe that the first case is most likely," Han Li calmly explained.

Having heard these words, Senior Martial Brother Feng and Yan Yu simultaneously let out a sigh of relief. Since the other party could only use this ferocious bewildering technique against females, the two no longer feared the technique. As for his magic power and magic tools, the two had nothing to fear.

“Senior Martial Brother Han! If us female cultivators come across this person, are we certain to be controlled for the rest of our lives? I cannot accept this!” Dong Xuan’er said this with a deathly pale complexion and looked as if she wanted to cry. This was the first time she had said “Senior Martial Brother Han” with this much grief.

When Han Li heard this, he remained silent. He wasn’t an admirer of hers. If she wanted someone to protect her, then she shouldn’t be looking at him!

However, Han Li did not know that ever since Dong Xuan’er had been rescued from that fearsome mind-control, Dong Xuan’er unconsciously became more dependant on Han Li. Seeing herself in this dangerous situation, she had automatically pleaded for him to take action.

With Han Li having yet to come up with a response, the other two felt sour and patted their chests toward the sky, each expressing their desire to protect Dong Xuan’er for the next few days and prevent that sorcerer from succeeding by all means.

When Dong Xuan’er heard what they had to say, her heart grew slightly more eased.

After all, with two Foundation Establishment cultivators protecting her, it seemed she wouldn’t have any problems. The first attempt to control her had gone smoothly as she had not expected it. But with her additional vigilance, the next attempt to

control her would not be so easy.

Thus, Dong Xuan'er recovered a bit of her spirit. Not long after, she was laughing and playing around with the two; her own charms had reached an extreme, mesmerizing them to the point where they didn't know which way was north.

When Han Li saw this, he didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

It could be said this Dong Xuan'er's cultivation art and that gorgeous man's bewildering technique were actually different methods that led to similar results, but the former wasn't nearly as overbearing.

However, her charming technique was certain to be an extremely high-grade bewildering technique. It could completely bewilder a man and completely take away his body and mind. From what Han Li had seen, it wasn't different from that glamorous man in the slightest! They were equally as dangerous!

Chapter 259: Movement Of The Wind

However, even as Han Li sighed, he was somewhat puzzled!

Although Han Li wasn't proficient in bewitchment techniques, Han Li knew a thing or two about them.

Every cultivator mastered the "Heaven's Eye Technique". It could even be considered the most basic of bewitchment techniques. If the gap in magic power between two cultivators was far too great and the stronger cultivator caught the other party off-guard by looking at his eyes while activating the Heaven's Eye Technique, then the cultivator on the receiving end would become stunned during a fight.

Other kinds of bewitchment-type magic techniques also relied on a huge disparity in magic power in order to control the victim's mind by force.

By common conventions, there wasn't a large enough gap between Dong Xuan'er's early Foundation Establishment cultivation and that glamorous man's mid Foundation Establishment cultivation where a gaze would immediately control her to such an absurd degree. If the other party were a Core Formation cultivator casting the bewitchment technique, then it would be somewhat possible.

However, from that glamorous man's expression and his resentful expression when he departed, this did not seem to be the case at all. It was absolutely impossible that he was a Core

Formation cultivator pretending to be a Foundation Establishment cultivator in order to play with them.

With this thought, Han Li finally felt somewhat more at ease. After all, with that glamorous man's resentful expression when he left, Han Li would have to be diligently on guard.

When he had lifted his head in contemplation, he noticed that Dong Xuan'er's lovely, pitiful appearance had long disappeared as she was flirting with the other two.

Seeing this scene, Han Li secretly let out a sigh and stood, wanting to head back to his room.

However, when Han Li put his hand on the wooden door, having not yet open it, he suddenly heard a man's loud voice from outside the inn.

"Guests of the inn, listen well. Tomorrow, the Treasure Seizing Assembly will be divided into two divisions. The cultivators of this country will be conducted on the west side on Yan Ling Castle. The cultivators of other countries will be conducted on the east side. We request all guests to arrive early. Those that arrive late will automatically be disqualified."

After this voice repeated this message three more times, the speaker seemed to have left.

When Han Li heard these words, he was startled. But soon after,

he didn't pay it any mind and walked into his room.

Although Han Li was surprised at the separation of cultivators in the competition, he didn't sense that anything was inappropriate.

After all, if cultivators of the seven sects and foreign cultivators were to compete, they were certain to provoke no small amount of incidences. This kind of xenophobic mentality was common in all places. This could clearly be seen at the previous confrontational circumstances in the teahouse.

As Han Li thought this, he sat cross-legged on his bed, intending to meditate and refine Qi throughout the night as preparation for tomorrow's Treasure Seizing Assembly.

.....

In some room inside Yan Ling Castle, the glamorous, devilish man sat on his wooden chair. Several men and women in front of him respectively made reports. As the man listened expressionlessly, a slight radiance flashed through his eyes. No one knew why he then coldly smiled.

.....

At this moment, on the west side of Yan Ling Castle's mountain peak, there were over ten green-robed Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators bustling about, burying a few things underground. The Ghost Spirit Sect's young master and the two Core Formation Experts

were indifferently looking down at the scene from the midair.

“How are things? This last-minute Yin Fire Great Formation is so feeble. Will it be effective?” the Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master suddenly asked.

“Young Sect Master, be at ease! There is no problem at all. Although this is a last-minute formation spell, our disciples are managing it. It will be able to display its trapping efficacy. Naturally if the late Foundation Establishment cultivators in the formation used the might of some particularly astonishing magic tools, this may not be the case, but the large majority of these cultivators are certain to be unable to escape.” After the old man “Brother Lishi” coughed a few times, he said this, shaking his head.

(TL: whoops, Brother Li is actually Brother Lishi)

“En, I am feeling relieved! The twelve guards I brought from the Ghost Spirit Sect won’t remain idle. That should be more than enough to handle the stragglers who escape the net!” The Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master said without worry.

Brother Lishi felt there was no problem and didn’t further speak.

In truth, if he didn’t require the souls and primordial spirits of these cultivators to be completely intact, the two brothers would be able to take care of it. Exterminating a few Foundation Establishment cultivators was a trivial matter, but how could they be bothered to do so! Brother Lishi proudly thought.

.....

Several thousands of kilometers away, in a secret room of Yellow Maple Valley, seven to eight Core Formation Experts had gathered together, nervously listening to a spotlessly clean yellow-robed old man speak. After listening to the old man's words, all of their complexions grew extremely dark.

Han Li's master Li Huayuan, Female Immortal Hong Bi, and even that fatty Lei Wanhe was among them. Their expressions were all extremely disturbed.

Not long after the cultivators left the secret room, the entirety of Yellow Maple Valley flurried with zeal.

Sound transmission talismans fluttered down throughout the whole sky. Below the storm of talismans, a storm of cultivators was disorderly rushing about on flying magic tools. A few moments later, groups of cultivators left Yellow Maple Valley during that very night, separately rushing forth in different directions.

This very scene equivalently unfolded in the other six sects. Furthermore, every sect had messengers rushing back and forth without end. It seemed as if the cultivation world of the State of Yue had become bloodthirsty overnight.

In the following days, clans of all sizes in the State of Yue received a conscription order sealed by a Sect Master of the Seven

Great Sects, calling upon each of the clan's outstanding disciples. Disobedience would be met with violent extermination from an enforcement squad.

Naturally, when the conscription order arrived at the Yan Clan three days later, no one responded. By the time, the Yan Clan was already deserted.

.....

Because Han Li and the other Seven Sect cultivators were too far away, they naturally did not know of this matter.

As a result, on the second day, just as light had begun to shine, a few cultivators had arrived on the west side of the mountain peak. A huge spell formation had already been established at that location. At the center of the formation were two middle-aged men dressed in Yan Clan apparel with their eyes closed.

At the back of the spell formation was a short stone platform. On that stone platform stood over ten Yan Clan members faintly covered in mist, talking about something. It seemed they were waiting for all the cultivators to all be present before starting the assembly.

Han Li had already arrived on the mountain peak. He hadn't appeared with Dong Xuan'er but rather arrived early by himself. On the mountain peak, he ran into a middle-aged Giant Sword Sect disciple surnamed Ba who had also arrived early. The two were chatting when something suddenly came to Han Li's mind.

“Elder Brother Ba, what does this spell formation do? Do you know?” After Han Li sized up the huge spell formation several times, he had found it irksome each time. After a moment of chatting, he couldn’t help but ask this.

“I am embarrassed. This one doesn’t understand much about spell formations, but I reckon it should be a protective barrier type restriction! After all, a competition between Foundation Establishment disciples must be contained, else the small mountain wouldn’t be able to withstand our bustling!” The cultivator surnamed Ba stoked his chin, not paying it much mind.

“Oh! That seems likely!” Although Han Li said this, he faintly felt an uneasy air from the spell formation. This was not something he could sense with the deepness of his magic power but rather a reaction completely stemming from his intuition.

Han Li wrinkled his brow and looked in every direction. At this moment, over thirty cultivators had already arrived. The Daoist Priests from the Clear Void Sect, that woman surnamed Fang from Heavenly Imperial Castle, and others he recognized began to appear. Furthermore, they all gathered into groups of three and four to talk about a few things.

“Brother Han, let us greet them! Wu Fazi and the other have already arrived!” The cultivator surnamed Ba saw the others assemble and suggested this to Han Li with a smile.

“Brother Ba, do not hesitate to go! This little brother still has a

few things to think about. Please do not let me trouble you!” Han Li lightly shook his head, unwilling to join together with so many people. It seemed a bit too troublesome.

The Giant Sword Sect Disciple shrugged his shoulders. Although he was a bit puzzled, he walked over by himself. After all, such good opportunities to make friends with cultivators from other sects were hard to come by, so he wouldn't lightly let it go.

When Han Li saw the man surnamed Ba leave, he didn't stay at that location. Instead, he habitually sought a secluded location and walked to the farthest corner away from the spell formation. Then he indifferently looked at the movements of the other cultivators.

An hour later, Dong Xuan'er and that Senior Martial Brother Feng had finally arrived. Furthermore after they arrived, they entered the crowd of Yellow Maple Valley cultivators. Not long after, Dong Xuan'er stirred up many intimate reactions from several men as if she were a fish in water. In addition, there was no trace of that Yan Yu who originally kept close to her side. Han Li felt somewhat surprised from this.

At this moment, the many cultivators who donned Yan Clan clothing on the stone platform were actually Ghost Spirit Sect cultivators counting the number of people that appeared.

“Young Master, we are still short two people. Furthermore, it is not longer early. Should we further wait?” After they counted the number of people, a Ghost Spirit Sect cultivator reported this to the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master.

“We don’t need to wait any longer! Immediately notify the two elders to start the great formation! If time runs too long, a few clever cultivators may sense that something isn’t right. That would be even worse! As for those two cultivators who didn’t appear, from the twelve guards, have guard eight and guard twelve go and exterminate them. Regardless of the reason why they didn’t appear, do not let them leave Yan Ling Castle alive!” The Ghost Spirit Sect’s young master didn’t hesitate to give his command. Killing intent permeated throughout his words.

Chapter 260: Trap

The cultivators beside the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master accepted their orders, transmitting a message to Brother Lishi while still under disguise. But with a startled expression, they turned their face to the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master and further asked for directions, "Young Sect Master, the two elders said there are three cultivators who are too far away from the spell formation. If we start, they will not be restricted by the formation spell. Please instruct us on how to draw those three closer!"

The Ghost Spirit Sect's young master eyes showed some amazement. He inwardly wrinkled his brow.

These circumstances were beyond his expectations. It could be said that the range of the last-minute Yin Fire Great Formation restriction range was not small, but there were still people that weren't within scope. This was quite strange.

With this thought, the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master Wang Chan first raised his head and took a look. Sure enough, he discovered three people who weren't within range of the spell formation.

Two of these people were a man and a woman from the Masked Moon Sect. They were kissing outside the northeast corner of the formation and whispering sweet nonsense underneath a large tree. The feeling of love was dense there, and they kept away from the crowd.

In the west, next to some mountain rock over thirty meters away from the formation boundary, stood a yellow-robed male youth who looked rather ordinary. The one who was insipidly observing the mountain peak was Han Li, who valued carefulness above all else.

“So it's those three!” Wang Chan said to himself thoughtfully.

After he muttered to himself, he quietly said a few words to the Ghost Spirit Sect cultivator next to him. The subordinate who heard him incessantly nodded his head in agreement.

This Ghost Spirit Sect cultivator dressed in Yan Clan attire walked onto the earth platform and into the mist. Then he stood not far away from the spell formation and started loudly shouting, “All guests that have come to participate in the assembly, come forth to register your name. After everyone has been accounted for, the Treasure Seizing Assembly will formally start...”

This person's shout immediately attracted the attention of the other cultivators. They couldn't help but draw closer to the spell formation one by one. The couple from the Masked Moon Sect somewhat unwillingly walked forward into the range of the spell formation's restrictions.

Seeing this scene, Wang Chan couldn't help but faintly smile underneath his mask. However, when his gaze turned to Han Li in the west, his cold smile immediately ceased.

That was because Han Li actually didn't move in the slightest. He

didn't have the slightest intention of registering his name. He had unexpectedly folded his arms and was engrossed in watching the crowd of cultivators gather together.

“What sect is that disciple from?” After a while, Wang Chan coldly asked this.

“From his clothing, he should be a cultivator from Yellow Maple Valley!” A Ghost Spirit Sect cultivator seemed to sense that the young sect master was in a bad mood. He carefully replied.

“Tell the two elders to start! This Yellow Maple Valley disciple seems to have some idea. To have me make use of myself is pretty impressive.” Wang Chan insipidly said. However, a faint blood-red color could be seen from his eyes; it seemed to be releasing a faint scent of blood.

“Yes, Young Master!” The several Ghost Spirit Sect guards shivered and respectfully answered.

.....

Watching from a distance, Han Li was leaning against a mountain rock. He seemed to be watching the group of cultivators register with a smile on his face. However, if one were to look at him closely, one would discover that his smile was forced and stiff. Furthermore, his forehead was covered in a thin layer of sweat.

“Those Yan Clan members are actually Ghost Spirit Sect

cultivators!” A moment ago, Han Li made this shocking discovery.

Originally, when these Ghost Spirit Sect members had disguised themselves as Yan Clan members, Han Li hadn't the slightest suspicion. When he heard was required to go up to register, he had intended to comply.

However, the moment when the person in the back raised his hand and called out to the crowd of cultivators, Han Li frighteningly discovered that Yan Clan member actually had dark green fingernails about half an inch long, exactly the same as the fingernails of the yellow-haired Ghost Spirit Sect eccentrics!

Han Li was extremely shocked and immediately felt as if cold water was poured on his head. His heart felt extremely cold.

“There's no way an ordinary person could have such dark green fingernails. Could it be they are....”

After Han Li made some incredulous conjectures, he was naturally unwilling to step forward.

At this time, he did his utmost to preserve a slight smile on his face as his eyes whirled in every direction, quietly observing. However, his surroundings seemed to be very ordinary. There didn't seem to be anybody lying in ambush. Could it be that person's fingernails were just a coincidence?

Han Li immediately refuted the thought that this was a

coincidence! In this world. how could there be so many coincidences? Furthermore, even if it were truly a coincidence, he still wouldn't take such a risk, especially with such a suspicious-looking spell formation.

With this thought, Han Li didn't further hesitate. With a wave of his hand, his Divine Wind Boat immediately appeared in his hand. Having not yet thrown it out, a lazy voice could suddenly be heard from above him.

“Who would've thought that someone at such a young age as yours would have some foresight! You were able to see our mistakes so quickly and wanted to leave! Could it be you didn't want to save your own sect members?”

Han Li's heart sunk. Without thinking, he suddenly stepped on the ground with the tip of his foot, and his figure suddenly leaped away behind him. When he shot out over thirty meters away, he finally stopped. But he then slapped his body and a red barrier suddenly enveloped him. Simultaneously, an azure light barrier appeared behind the red barrier, close to his body.

At this moment, a slightly astonished gasp came from midair. It wasn't known whether it was a gasp of admiration at Han Li's quick reaction or his amazement toward having activating two protective barriers at nearly the same time.

After hearing this, Han Li felt slightly more at ease. Then with a solemn expression, he raised his head toward the sky.

About thirty meters in the air, he saw a person with a silver mask and green robes standing on a huge pitchfork that was about ten meters long. The dark green pitchfork was surrounded by a layer of black Qi, causing those who saw it to feel incomparably cold.

Having seen this, Han Li's heart grew cold, and he couldn't help but blurt out, "Ghost Spirit Sect's Young Master?"

"Hehe! It seems I don't need to introduce myself to you. It is great that you know who I am! However, you have best take the initiative to enter that formation and live a bit longer, else I will immediately extract your soul!"

The blood in Wang Chan's eyes seemed to have grown far more concentrated than when he was on the earth platform. His eyes were now mostly red and faintly released a trace of violence. From a single look, Han Li's heart continuously stirred. He didn't know what fearsome secret technique he cultivated.

However, when he heard the words "enter that formation", Han Li couldn't help but raise his eyebrows in shock. He turned his eyes and the scene that unfolded before him caused his expression to become dreadfully dark.

At an unknown time, a huge black light barrier had been created from the center of the huge formation, spanning over three hundred meters in radius. A dense dark red fog filled the barrier. Not only did it cloud the scene within, but not the slightest sound could be heard, as if there was no one inside.

Surrounding the light barrier stood eight green-robed cultivators. They were attentively staring at the scene within the dark barrier, not a single one of them looking in their young master's direction.

It seemed the subordinates of this young sect master seemed to have complete confidence in him!

After Han Li swept his gaze back, he quickly regained his bearings. He didn't dare to be further distracted.

Without a doubt, although this Ghost Spirit Sect young master was only of mid Foundation Establishment, he was an extremely fearsome opponent. If Han Li was careless for even a moment, he would remain at this location for eternity.

With this thought, Han Li held out a talisman in his hand and a white light emerged from his palm. He held his hand out to the wind, and in the blink of an eye, it turned into a shield of white scales that covered his front. With his other hand, he threw out his Divine Wind Boat about thirty meters behind him, where it gently floated in the air.

The next step of Han Li's plan was naturally to board the Divine Wind Boat and immediately escape. Only an idiot would stay here and resolutely risk their life against the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master!

Let alone fighting the young master of an outstanding sect, even if he was able to defeat this young sect master, there would be

many assistants waiting afterwards! He had no plans to meet his end in a crowd of enemies!

Thus, Han Li thought to hurriedly return to Yellow Maple Valley and report to his superiors of the cooperation between the Ghost Spirit Sect and the Yan Clan as his utmost priority. As for that Dong Xuan'er and that Senior Martial Brother Feng, they could only hope that their masters would come and save them.

Seeing Han Li's movements, Wang Chan wildly howled with laughter, causing Han Li to feel a violent chill.

“Thinking of running? How about you let me send you to the other side!”

Having said this, this Ghost Spirit Sect young master suddenly spun around on his pitchfork, and in an instant, a scarlet, blood-red fog raced forward, aggressively sweeping toward Han Li in the form of a bloody cloud over thirty meters wide.

When Han Li saw this, he didn't dare to further hesitate. He leaped into his Divine Wind Boat and used its maximum output. In the blink of an eye, the boat with its passenger turned into a streak of white light, rushing toward the sky to escape.

“Hehe! Boy, you know nothing! My Great Blood Spirit Arts' evasion methods are truly more than just fast; you won't be able to escape!”

Wang Chan's wild laughs continued to follow behind Han Li.

Although he didn't turn his head, Han Li felt that the other party's voice was getting closer and closer.

This person's evasion technique was truly a bit quicker than his Divine Wind Boat's top speed! Han Li's complexion became slight dark green!

Chapter 261: Great Blood Spirit Arts

In the blink of an eye, the blood cloud behind him chased Han Li's streak of white light for over fifty kilometers. However, the distance between the two gradually shrank to about thirty meters.

As Han Li inwardly complained without end, Wang Chan who was chasing him on the blood cloud was greatly amazed!

Although the Great Blood Spirit Arts blood evasion technique did not dare to proclaim itself as the fastest among the six sects, its speed was certainly among the top five secret arts in all the sects, much faster than that top-grade flying magic tools. But even though he was using the complete strength of his flying evasion technique, he was unable to overtake Han Li's small boat by now. While this surprised Wang Chan, his desire to kill also grew stronger.

Han Li knew that if this wild rush continued, in the time it took to make a cup of tea, he would likely be caught. He had to do something now!

Thus, his hand touched his storage pouch, and a stack of elementary fireball talismans appeared in his hand. Without thinking much further, he madly threw them behind him and continued his wild rush forward. He immediately heard the sounds of explosion behind him.

Han Li couldn't help but turn his head to look!

He only saw the front of that vigorous, wild blood cloud. It seemed to have scattered from the explosions and appeared a bit thinner, faintly revealing the figure of the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master.

Han Li felt joy. Just as he wanted to throw out the rest of his talismans, inside the blood cloud, Wang Chan suddenly moved his hand. A green light flew straight toward Han Li and grew larger as it approached. This was Wang Chan's flying magic tool that he originally stepped on.

With no better option, Han Li immediately threw them at the green pitchfork instead of towards the blood cloud. Twenty to thirty fireballs exploded in rapid succession against the huge pitchfork covered in black Qi. It tumbled several times in succession and was unable to further approach.

But during this moment of interference, the blood cloud had once again returned to its original form, wildly dancing like a furious flame.

At this moment, Wang Chan suddenly let out several sharp whistles to the sky. Following these heaven-piercing whistles, the blood cloud suddenly increased dramatically in size. In an instant, it nearly filled the entire sky; its influence had actually become nearly omnipresent.

Immediately after, the overflowing blood cloud increased its speed by several times. As if it were a violent tsunami rushing down a mountain, it arrived in front of the Divine Wind Boat. Furthermore, with the sudden increase in speed, it surrounded and

trapped Han Li in midair.

Frightened, Han Li hastily stopped his Divine Wind Boat from colliding with the blood cloud and took out a magic tool that appeared to be jet black claw from his storage pouch. At this moment, that strange green pitchfork silently attacked from behind.

“Go.”

As if Han Li had eyes behind his head, he threw this magic tool behind him, releasing a deep roar! As he released it, this claw immediately turned several meters large and fiercely grabbed the attacking green pitchfork.

The green pitchfork didn't give up without a fight, releasing several strands of black Qi from its tip. An instant later, the huge claw was surrounded by twisting layers of black Qi, unable to move in the slightest.

When Han Li saw this, he performed a hand incantation, and black meter-long streaks emerged from the claw and rustled about, scattering the black Qi that was holding it down and preventing the Qi from taking shape.

“Not bad! Not bad! As expected, it isn't a common top-grade magic tool. It was actually able to easily break the Yin spirit threads from the Yin Jade Pitchfork. It seems that me personally taking action was not in vain!” Wang Chan's voice erratically came from different locations within the blood cloud. At the same time,

the green pitchfork hummed for a moment and then retreated into the blood cloud, disappearing without a trace.

This was the top-grade magic tool refined from a flood dragon's claw "Black Dragon's Grasp". Having retrieved it, Han Li vigilantly looked in every direction.

At this moment, the blood cloud had already covered the entire sky, obscuring even the slightest cracks. All he could smell from the air was the disgusting scent of bloodlust.

If he didn't use his strength to carve out a path, he would be unable to escape. The moment Han Li thought this, he released the Black Dragon's Grasp.

But without waiting for him to finish, the blood cloud in front of him suddenly boiled. Then two blood-red monsters about three meters tall emerged. These two monsters had fangs, claws, a short horn, a sharp pointed tail, and eyes that were a deep red just like Wang Chan's. Waving their sharp claws, they pounced towards Han Li.

"These are?"

This was the first time Han Li saw monsters such as these. From their appearance, they seemed to be exactly like imps from folklore. However, Han Li still felt fear and hastily threw the Black Dragon's Grasp towards them. With a single light grasp, the imp was completely broken, turning back into a blood cloud that returned to its source.

Han Li felt a bit more at ease. They weren't hard to handle at all!

But just as Han Li thought it would be a simple job, he could hear Wang Chan's mocking laugh from every direction.

“Hehe! Your esteemed self, don't relax too early! Although my Great Blood Spirit Arts' blood ghosts are extremely easy to dispatch, the show has just begun!”

Hearing these words, Han Li's heart sank.

However, his heart was still firm and unyielding. He wouldn't let the opponent's words move him too easily! Regardless of the consequences, he revolved his magic tool and struck into the blood cloud. As a result, the Black Dragon's Grasp stirred up the blood cloud and easily drilled into it.

Han Li felt joy. But an instant later, the Black Dragon's Grasp became lifeless and lost mobility as if it were on the verge of collapse. Han Li was greatly startled and hastily attempted to retrieve the magic tool with all his strength before he completely lost control. Fortunately, the Black Dragon's Grasp was able to leave the blood cloud and flew back to his side.

“Yi! This magic tool of yours was actually able to somewhat endure my blood cloud's corruption. This young master wants it even more!”

Wang Chan lightly let out a sound of surprise before revealing unconcealed greed.

At this moment, the blood cloud rumbled from every direction and blood ghosts began to crawl out one after another. They pounced, racing towards Han Li.

Han Li wore a dazed expression and then brandished the Black Dragon's Grasp in an overbearing manner, running into the blood ghosts and immediately ripping them apart, turning them back into blood clouds.

When Han Li had killed over a hundred blood ghosts and still saw there was a steady stream of blood ghosts being born from every direction, he let out a sigh. Sure enough, the circumstances seemed extremely terrible. These monsters were endless, much to his surprise. When he killed one, another would be born from the blood cloud. There were about thirty monsters at any one time.

It seems that this Ghost Spirit Sect young master wished to tire him to death in this place.

With this thought, Han Li was naturally unwilling to continue.

He patted his storage pouch with his hand and took out several stacks of elementary mid-and high-grade talismans, about seventy or eighty in total. Then, in a single breath, he threw all of them to a single side of the blood cloud. Immediately after, fireballs, icicles and other such things showered out. Furthermore, Han Li personally cast several fire serpents closely behind the barrage.

After previously seeing that a rapid succession of fireballs were able to somewhat scatter the blood clouds, Han Li had long committed it to heart. Now he was relying on these magic techniques to hopefully break open a path for him to escape.

“You sure know how to dream!”

Wang Chan darkly yelled with a deep voice. Han Li unexpectedly had so many talismans on hand, which truly exceeded his expectations. After all, aside from elementary high-grade talismans, other talismans weren't much use to Foundation Establishment cultivators.

However, although this Ghost Spirit Sect cultivator was proud and arrogant, he truly didn't dare to allow his blood cloud to receive these magic techniques. After all, he only cultivated the Great Blood Spirit Arts to the second layer, so the cloud was unable to withstand such a great bombardment of magic techniques. As for magic tool attacks, because of the blood cloud's magic tool corruption properties, he wasn't particularly afraid of them.

Following his shout, several black human skulls suddenly appeared in midair between the blood cloud and the barrage of magic techniques before simultaneously opening their mouths and spurting out puffs of black Qi, immediately obstructing these magic techniques. After a burst of violent explosions, apart from the shaking of human skulls, the blood clouds behind them weren't disturbed in the slightest.

Han Li's complexion darkened, and couldn't help looking in the other directions. But without waiting for him to act, black skulls had already appeared in the other directions of the blood cloud. At this moment, Wang Chan's cold chuckles could be heard, "You believed there was an opportunity to take advantage of? Obediently become food for my blood ghosts! I truly wish to see the bloody scene as you are torn apart by my blood ghosts. Surely the scene will be bloody and extremely beautiful. I am getting a bit impatient to see it!"

Hearing this Ghost Spirit Sect's young master howled with laughter once more, his insanity was quite obvious.

"Madman!"

As Han Li controlled the Black Dragon's Grasp to deal with the blood ghosts, he was anxiously thinking of a plan to respond, his forehead laced with cold sweat.

At this moment, Han Li had already taken out a mid-grade spirit stone and held it in his hand, starting to replenish a bit of his magic power. After all, killing an unending stream of blood ghosts was quite difficult for an early Foundation Establishment cultivator such as himself!

Wang Chan was sitting cross-legged at the peak of the blood cloud, continuously using hand incantations to hasten the manifestation of blood ghosts. He was entirely free of worry.

Although the magic power of this Yellow Maple Valley cultivator

wasn't very high, the magic tools he had were truly strange yet exceptional. After this fight, there would be quite a few more fine magic tools to add to his pouch. He couldn't help but be slightly pleased with himself. The crazed bloodlust residing in his heart seemed to have been alleviated by no small amount.

Suddenly a “Bang” could be heard from within the blood cloud. A thick, dark red fog appeared. In an instant, Han Li's figure hid within the fog, which slowly started to spread. Not long after, it enveloped the blood ghosts and started to merge with the blood cloud.

Wang Chan was greatly startled. But when he found that this dense, dark red fog merged with his own blood cloud and had been absorbed, he immediately calmed down.

Although this dense fog had been continuously absorbed by the blood cloud, it hadn't decreased in the slightest. That dense dark red fog had caused the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master to be unable to see Han Li's actions at this moment. He grew greatly suspicious!

Chapter 262: Escape

After a few more moments, the blood cloud remained hazy without the slightest noise coming from it. When those little ghosts approached the densest area of the fog, they would immediately be cut into shreds; no activity could be discerned.

At this moment, Wang Chan could sit still no longer. His two hands formed a seal, and the skulls floating on the surface of the blood cloud opened their mouths wide. Ten or so black columns of light as wide as a bowl shot out, heading directly towards Han Li's original location from all directions.

“Peng” A light tremor sounded out.

Within the dense fog, a faint white light flashed and moved about; in the fierce collisions between the black and white colored streaks, a white screen of light became faintly discernible inside the dense fog, slightly startling the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master. However, immediately afterwards he recalled the white scale shield that Han Li had tossed out from the very beginning.

Wang Chan knit his eyebrows; after hesitating for a moment, he still began to speak to himself:

“Since there are so many high-quality magic tools to be obtained, I am willing to lose some blood essence! Otherwise, this brat may use some deceptive technique to escape.”

Having said this, Wang Chan suddenly reached out his right

index finger and placed it on the corner of his mouth. Then, he gently bit it, squeezing out an extremely dense drop of fresh blood from the wound, and gently dripped it on the blood cloud below him. Next, his two hands reached deeply into the blood cloud, concentrating on hastening the magic technique.

Following Wang Chan's slow uttering of the incantation, the red cloud originally enshrouding Han Li slowly began to revolve faster and faster, gradually extruding towards the center. Those blood ghosts automatically disappeared without a trace.

The azure-red dense fog, following the increased speed of revolution of the blood cloud, was very quickly swept away and absorbed into it, causing the center to slowly to become clear, revealing a huge, white light barrier. This light barrier, with a white scale shield as its center, was like a bowl that was flipped upside down.

Near the center of the light curtain, Han Li was holding a strangely-shaped dagger in one hand, letting out astonishing yellow streaks. In the other hand, he held a folded, sparkling talisman, wanting to unleash its offensive power. Two spheres, one azure and one red, were floating next to him, continuing to emit dense dark red fog. Wang Chun saw all of this very clearly.

“You.....” Seeing this, the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master coldly laughed a few times and wanted to continue sneering at him.

However, he had just spit out one word when he saw the Han Li below him suddenly open his palm; that small dagger gently shook

and became a yellow blade many tens of feet long, shooting directly towards Wang Chan.

At the same time, the folded talisman in his other hand was tossed out, unleashing ten or so raging fire dragons that flew over all at once.

“Brat, magic tools can not break through my Great Blood Spirit Arts, unless.....”

Wang Chan was originally moving the skulls carelessly about and causing them to spit out more black Qi, but as soon as he contentedly said the word “unless”, he suddenly thought of something, and his expression immediately changed as he rocketed into the air like a crane, flying away from the blood cloud.

At the same time, that yellow blade, with a few “pu pu”s, attacked and broke into pieces numerous skulls blocking the way. Next, it broke a gap through the blood cloud along with the fire dragons, charging ferociously towards where the young sect master was originally sitting. Next, a streak of white light rapidly flew out from the gap, closely followed by the yellow blade, which had turned around.

“Treasure talisman!” Wang Chan yelled, both surprised and outraged.

In his moment of negligence, he did not expect that when Han Li had used the dense fog, it was actually just to buy time to use a treasure talisman. Otherwise, even if his opponent had treasure

talismans, the young master definitely would not allow the other person to have time to activate it. However, the probability of an early Foundation Establishment cultivator possessing a treasure talisman was truly very small, leading to his oversight on this matter.

But even if the other person had a treasure talisman, based on his identity as the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master, how could he fear them? He had also brought along two treasure talismans, and one of them was actually an extremely rare treasure talisman with a particular attribute. Naturally, he would not Han Li let escape just like that.

The furious Wang Chan leaped into the blood cloud, once again causing this blood cloud to roll together and rise up; he controlled it so that it was as fast as a shooting star, catching up to Han Li.

Standing on the Divine Wind Boat, Han Li coldly watched the blood cloud drawing near in the time it takes for a stick of incense to burn. He suddenly waved one hand. Immediately afterwards, the yellow blade suddenly thrust out, directly shooting towards the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master hiding in the blood cloud.

However, Wang Chan had prepared himself much earlier; he tossed out the item in his hand, and a bright, golden skull manifested, then increased in size. Its huge mouth actually clamped down on the yellow blade with one bite, stopping it from advancing even a tiny bit.

Han Li was surprised and hurriedly tried to retrieve it. However, that yellow blade, apart from bouncing around in the skull's

mouth a few times, was unable to release its power.

Wang Chan grinned, and the blood cloud next to him began to expand again, causing Han Li to feel a chill in his heart; it seemed like he was about to be bound again. However, at this instant, the blood cloud that had been boiling suddenly died down. The expression of Wang Chan, who was forming magic hand seals, changed even more; not only did the flying cloud's speed slow down, his face actually became faintly covered with an azure black layer.

Han Li, who was constantly observing the opponent, was greatly startled upon seeing this scene.

He saw that a panicked expression appeared on the face of his opponent, who let out a long howl, not even paying attention to the golden skull that was locked in a stalemate with Han Li. Wrapped in the blood cloud, he flew backwards along his original path like lightning. Puzzled, Han Li stared in a daze, stopping in place.

After some hesitation, he turned both the yellow blade and the golden skull into two talismans, easily retrieving them into his hand. Then, he gazed at the slowly disappearing figure of the Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master, still unsure of what to do.

He didn't have enough guts to give chase.

However, upon hearing the other person's wailing slowly fade, Han Li immediately realized something and hurriedly urged the

Divine Wind Boat into changing directions before disappearing into the horizon.

.....

Not long after, the Han Li who had just escaped from danger began to feel great regret after thinking about it carefully!

He finally knew why the opponent didn't chase him and instead had turned around. The opponent had been poisoned by the extremely toxic Inky Flood Dragon venom!

This all was because the opponent dared to absorb large quantities of the poisonous fog that the "Azure Fire Miasma" released into the blood cloud.

When this dense fog was being refined, according to his requests, the remaining poison from the Inky Flood Dragon's core was refined and incorporated into the fog as well. Today, this blood cloud, which had absorbed the dense fog and still contained large amounts of toxins, had definitely been reabsorbed by this young sect master when he chased after Han Li. Thus, after he had become poisoned, how could he not retreat in shock!

The more Han Li thought, the more he felt regret in his heart. Since he didn't realize it until now, perhaps he had some mental illness! He had just let a good opportunity to kill a strong opponent and take even more of the treasure on him slip away; this truly caused Han Li to feel somewhat depressed!

However, as for why the opponent didn't even retrieve a treasure talisman as powerful as this golden skull and just ran away, Han Li just couldn't understand it!

Han Li didn't know that at another location, the similarly extremely prudent Ghost Spirit Sect's young sect master, who had fled when the situation turned ugly, was also foaming with rage! At his side, the two Core Formation cultivators, the Lishi Brothers, looked at each other.

It turned out that just as Wang Chan had traveled a short distance during his retreat, he ran into the two Ghost Spirit Sect elders who had just dispatched all of the Seven Great Sect disciples at once. Because they were worried about this young sect master's safety, after considering things carefully, they finally caught up.

Having seen Wang Chan now poisoned, they naturally used their profound magic power to help him force out the toxin immediately.

This young sect master quietly guessed the reason why he had been poisoned, but he mistook Han Li's unintended actions as purposefully laying a trap for him. This caused Wang Chan, who had never before suffered such large losses, to immediately hate Han Li to the bone, and he quietly began to view him as a formidable opponent.

With these two trains of thought haunting Wang Chan, he didn't give up hope completely. Disregarding the still somewhat weak condition of his body, he fiercely chased in his original direction along with the two elders for a few hundred kilometers without

success. However, the vexation in his heart became like a fish bone that permanently lodged itself in his heart.

As for that golden skull treasure talisman that he had been forced to give up because it was entangled with the opponent's treasure talisman and he couldn't retrieve it back then, he did not actually care too much. After all, it had been used many times; at this point, it was most likely a wasted product whose strength was almost depleted. Even if it was retrieved by Han Li, he could only use it once or twice, so it wouldn't be very useful.

However, what caused his rage to soar was that just when he returned to the small mountain peak where he had set the ambush, a Ghost Spirit Sect guard reported to him that a group of people from the Joyous Meeting Sect, part of the Six Devil Dao Sects, had suddenly launched a surprise attack on them.

Although there were no casualties, two female cultivators whom the guards had subdued had been forcefully seized by the group. Based on the leader's outstanding appearance, it was the Joyous Meeting Sect's Sect Master's second son, Tian Buque, Wang Chan's junior whose reputation was not smaller than his own, but whose tactics were vicious.

Upon hearing the bad news, although only Wang Chan's eyes dimmed on the surface, he felt like puking blood! Han Li and Tian Buque could now be considered to have become part of Wang Chan's must-kill list.

"Let's go. Notify the Yan Clan Elder to immediately begin our retreat!" After a long while, Wang Chan let out a sigh and finally

said this coldly.

At that moment, Han Li flew towards Yellow Maple Valley without the slightest delay. On the way there, he ran into a mixed group of cultivators from Saber Transformation Dock and the Masked Moon Sect. Then the leading late Foundation Establishment Sect cultivator dropped an unexpected announcement: he was being conscripted!

Chapter 263: True Strength

Han Li took a look at the warrant in his hand. It was a conscription order for all traveling disciples, signed by every sect master. He felt extremely depressed!

The conscription order had to be genuine as the sect masters' spirit emblem wasn't something that could be forged. However, he truly did not want to follow these orders!

From the other party's words, Han Li had learned about the Six Devil Dao Sect's invasion and the great, unavoidable calamity that was about to fall upon the State of Yue's cultivation world.

Regardless of whether or not the Seven Sects of the State of Yue could resist, innumerable cultivators were certain to die. Even Core Formation Experts would have their core destroyed and perish in no small number.

Thus, when Han Li learned of this astonishing information, what he wanted to do the most was to immediately return to his Immortal's cave and seclude himself for several tens of years.

However, he also knew that this was merely a pipe dream. As a disciple of the Seven Sects, how could he so easily escape from this great inferno?

While Han Li thought about this, he had already been conscripted by the Masked Moon Sect cultivator in front of him. At this moment, the Masked Moon Sect cultivator said with a smile,

“Has this Junior Martial Brother clearly read it? Could Junior Martial Brother state his name and cultivation? We will be working together in the future, so the more we know about each other’s capabilities, the better!”

Han Li composed himself, looked at this person, and then looked at the thirty-plus cultivators behind him. Among these cultivators, there were three late Foundation Establishment cultivators. The rest were Qi Condensation disciples. This caused Han Li to be slightly at ease. At the very least, it didn’t seem this assignment was going to be very difficult.

With this thought, Han Li cupped his fist and said, “Yellow Maple Valley’s Han Li! Early Foundation Establishment!”

Although the Foundation Establishment cultivators could clearly see each other’s cultivation, it was a matter of courtesy. Han Li sincerely carried this out. After all, the other party included late Foundation Establishment disciples with cultivation bases far greater than his own. He wasn’t willing to rashly offend them. Soon after, Han Li asked with misgivings, “Brother, why do you not suspect my identity? Right after you stopped me, you immediately showed me the conscription warrant. Surely you didn’t rely solely on my Yellow Maple Valley uniform?”

When Han Li originally saw this group of Saber Transformation Dock and Masked Moon Sect cultivators, Han Li originally planned to flee. However, he didn’t think this fellow with amazing eyesight would flash several times and appear in front of him, blocking his way and announcing that he was being conscripted.

“Hehe! In the last Trial by Blood and Fire, this one had previously seen Junior Martial Brother! I didn’t think that several years afterwards, Junior Martial Brother Han would actually reach Foundation Establishment. This is truly a matter worth celebrating!” This male Masked Moon Sect cultivator who appeared thirty years old said this with a slight smile, causing Han Li to feel great surprise.

“Who is your esteemed self?”

Upon hearing the other party’s words, Han Li began to feel that he felt somewhat familiar. It seemed that the man really had seen him at the Trial by Blood and Fire!

“This one is Xuan Le, a steward of the Masked Moon Sect. Last time, I accompanied Martial Aunt Ni Chang’s squad. There, I saw the shocking scene of Junior Martial Han’s great harvest with my own eyes!” The man lightly chuckled, saying this with deep meaning.

At this moment, Han Li suddenly realized something. This person was one of the four Masked Moon Sect Foundation Establishment leaders from that time. Han Li hadn’t paid much attention to him, so he only remembered a vague impression. But after some further thought, he became slightly shocked. He had been in a hurry just now, but this person was actually able to recognize him with a glance from such a far distance. This was truly incredible.

“This one knows that Junior Martial Brother Han had been hurrying on his journey and certainly had some urgent matters.

However, this one is truly lacking manpower for this mission and had no better option than to have Junior Martial Brother provide a bit of assistance,” Xuan Ye politely explained.

When Han Li heard this, the corner of his mouth twitched, and he couldn't help but bitterly smile, thinking, “This late Foundation Establishment cultivator, you already took out the conscription warrant. How could I possibly refuse! I can't say no unless I want to be branded for being insubordinate.”

As Han Li thought this, he took another look at the other three Foundation Establishment cultivators behind him and could only summon the courage to say, “Since Senior Martial Brother Xuan explained this, I will naturally follow your commands! However, this one must report an important matter to his sect master. I hope that Senior Martial Brother Xuan's sect members will deliver this information!”

Han Li then systematically narrated what had occurred at Yan Ling Castle in full detail. Naturally, Han Li had left the details of his escape ambiguous.

As such, when Xuan Ye and the others heard of this, they turned pale with fright. They hastily sent two Qi Condensation disciples to each sect to deliver this information. Then with unsightly expressions, they continued on their way with Han Li.

Considering their current strength and the collusion between the Yan Clan and the Devil Dao, they didn't dare to criticize him for leaving the others behind. They could only pass this scalding hot potato to the Seven Sects by dispatching messengers to them.

Naturally, the validity of Han Li's information would be verified by the upper echelon.

As they journeyed on route, Han Li eventually learned of their assignment from the other cultivators. They were being sent to reinforce the garrison of a particularly large spirit stone mine. The original security assigned there was fundamentally incapable of resisting a minor Devil Dao raid.

Knowing that his assignment wasn't to become cannon fodder in an upfront melee against the Six Devil Dao Sects, Han Li finally let out a sigh of relief.

In truth, even if he returned to Yellow Maple Valley, he was likely to be immediately be dispatched on a mission. Furthermore, his assignment might not necessarily be better than this one.

Although this assignment was slightly dangerous, so long as he was a bit careful, the possibilities of making it through in one piece was rather high. After all, this spirit stone mine of theirs was only somewhat large, spanning over ten mountains. If the enemy wanted to mount a raid on the seven sect's spirit mines, it was likely they would target the largest mines first.

With this thought, Han Li's conflicted mood faded away as he became much more familiar with Xuan Ye and the other cultivators throughout the following days.

Several days later, the group of cultivators finally arrived at a large wasteland within the borders of the State of Yue. That spirit

stone mine was located within a huge canyon in the wasteland that was more than three hundred meters deep.

Under Xuan Ye's guidance, they flew into the canyon, which was concealed by a formation spell. At the same time, several Seven Sect cultivators came out to greet them.

The leader of the original guards of the spirit stone mine was an old man at early Foundation Establishment wearing Heavenly Imperial Fortress clothes. Besides him were five or six Qi Condensation disciples.

With such weak guards, it was no wonder the upper echelons of the seven sects had anxiously dispatched support.

The old man who called himself Yu Xing led them into a huge cave dwelling inside the canyon. There, he gave Han Li and the others a detailed explanation on the circumstances of the spirit stone mine. Then, Xuan Ye swiftly and decisively arranged their defenses.

He took out over ten formation flags and formation disks and had the male cultivators arrange an autonomous offensive formation underneath the illusion formation. He also had Han Li and the other cultivators divide into groups to take turns patrolling and standing guard near the spirit stone mine in order to prevent enemy raids. Cultivators not on duty could meditate and cultivate their magic power.

Han Li was very pleased with Xuan Ye's arrangements.

Like this, Han Li would be able to compensate for the deficiencies in his strength!

From what he experienced from his fight with the Ghost Spirit Sect, Han Li had come to understand that his previous manner of relying on strategy and nimble movement to deal with the enemy was fundamentally incapable of dealing against enemies with large disparities in strength. Upon meeting a ferocious character like the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master, everything he could possibly muster had appeared powerless before him. Even the treasure talisman he had put high hopes in had almost been snatched away. He was no longer able to once again fix his problems with a single blow.

If it weren't for the surprising effects of the poisonous fog released by the "Azure Fire Miasma", he would have long been buried underneath the yellow earth. Even his very own soul may have been collected by his opponent and tormented in more than a hundred ways. When he thought of that dreadful fate worse than death, Han Li felt chilled to the bone!

A great fear of that top-grade Devil Dao secret technique, the Great Blood Spirit Arts, had been born in Han Li's heart!

He clearly understood that if he were to come across the Ghost Spirit Sect young master again, it was likely he would only be able to resign himself to death against his opponent's secret techniques. Unless he cultivated the Azure Essence Sword Art to Core Formation, its divine abilities fundamentally wouldn't be able to contend against that opponent.

During the Six Devil Dao Sect's invasion of the State of Yue, the Seven Great Sects had vigorously struck back during the confusion, so melees between cultivators became commonplace. During this time, long-term plans had become secondary in favor of quickly increasing one's strength, allowing a cultivator to preserve his life in this period of chaos.

Thus, his original plans for cultivation must adapt!

The Azure Essence Sword Art would be set aside for the time being. He would first cultivate the "Great Development Technique" to substantially increase his strength.

Having previously seen the overbearing power of mechanical puppets, Han Li was convinced that even if he could only cultivate the first layer of the Great Development Technique, he would have enough power to defend himself. After all, he already had several tens of mechanical puppets on hand.

Naturally, he would have to study those puppet sutras and hope he would be able to create a few simple mechanical puppets in the short term. This "Great Development Technique" would then be a continued source of strength throughout his time in Foundation Establishment.

After repeatedly pondering over this several times, Han Li felt this decision was correct and cultivated the "Great Development Technique" during his time off duty. At the same time, he also used a few simple materials he had on hand and started attempting

to create elementary mechanical beasts, devoting his energy to creating puppets similar to his figurines.

Chapter 264: Mechanical Puppets And The Great Development Technique

On the wasteland, a meter-long lizard stuck its head out from a heavily eroded rock and looked around, preparing for the day's hunt.

But just as it crawled out several meters from its nest, a yellow monster about three meters long suddenly leaped out from the sandy soil. It used its two front claws and mouth, pouncing at the lizard and easily breaking its neck. Holding the corpse in its mouth, it then hurriedly rushed forth in some direction.

This strange beast had four claws and a long pointed tail. It appeared to be a huge lizard but its entire body was extremely hard. As it ran, it made creaking noises; it was actually a mechanical figurine.

When this strange animal ran about half a kilometer, it reached a yellow-robed man sitting in meditation on a flat rock. Then it tossed the dead lizard next to this man's side and ran off.

This yellow-robed man wasn't surprised in the slightest. His expression remained unwavered.

He calmly moved his hand. The dead lizard at his side slowly flew up several feet in the air before stopping.

Then this yellow-robed man extended his forefinger to the

lizard's head and muttered something.

Not long after, a faint white light slowly emitted from his extended forefinger.

As he continued his incantation, the white light grew increasingly bright until it became blinding.

“Swiftly!”

Seeing that the crucial moment had not yet passed, yellow-robed man yelled this in a low voice.

The white light on his forefinger shot out a white thread that entered the deepest part of the lizard's skull. Then the yellow-robed man strenuously pulled back at the thread. His expression was solemn as he exercised extremely caution.

Eventually, under the yellow-robed man's careful gaze, the white thread pulled out a green sphere of light from the lizard's corpse. It was light as a feather, only as large as his thumb.

When the yellow-robed man saw this, he beamed as if he had acquired a rare treasure.

A light flashed from his other hand, revealing a small light yellow jade bottle. Poof. Streaks of multicolored lights shot from the bottle, sweeping the green ball of light into the bottle.

At this moment, the yellow-robed man let out a deep breath as if he were relieved of a burden, wiping a thin layer of sweat from his forehead. It could clearly be seen that his previous action had expended no small amount of energy.

“This soul extraction technique truly isn’t something an early Foundation Establishment cultivator is easily capable of using. The probability of success is far too low. There is only one success for every three or four attempts. It seems I’ll have to spend the whole day here.” The yellow-robed man looked at the small jade bottle in his hand and muttered to himself. His face wore a slight expression of helplessness.

This man was Han Li, who was currently practicing the “Great Development Technique”.

The reason why he appeared at this barren area, about fifty kilometers away from the spirit stone mine, was because he wanted to gather animal souls. This was normally something that only people of the Devilish Dao would do. The reason as to why Han Li was currently doing this was because he was studying the “Puppet Sutras”.

Originally, after he studied the initial step of the puppet refinement technique, Han Li discovered that puppet refinement not only required the normal materials used to refine magic tools, but it also required the souls of living creatures. Otherwise, if it were refined without a soul, it wouldn’t have any spiritual properties and would fundamentally be the same as a common figurine.

The greater the grade of the puppet, the greater the soul it contained. Only as such would the puppet's efficacy be displayed. For this reason, at the end of the 《Puppet Sutras》, it included three techniques commonly used by those of the Devilish Dao: “Soul Extraction Technique”, “Soul Concentration Technique”, and “Soul Refinement Technique”.

This “Soul Extraction Technique” was the magic technique that Han Li had used to extract the soul from the dead lizard.

Not only was the power of this magic technique weak, but its rate of success was also low. Furthermore, it could only be used on corpses that had recently died. Compared to the secret techniques of the Devilish Dao that specialized in dealing with souls, it could be said the difference in power was far too great!

However, the sole benefit of this magic technique was that it required an extremely lower amount of magic power. Mid Foundation Establishment cultivators would be able to frequently use it. Naturally, an early Foundation Establishment cultivator such as Han Li could also use it with difficulty, but the rate of success wouldn't be particularly high.

The “Soul Concentration Technique” was a magic technique that condensed souls. After all, powerful souls weren't easily found. Normally, high-grade puppets would use artificially strengthened souls that were refined from combining several, tens, or even several tens of weak souls. Although these kinds of souls weren't as good as innately strong souls, they were far stronger than using low-grade souls. Thus, this magic technique was a required

technique to learn puppet refinement.

The last was “Soul Refinement Technique”. As its name implies, it is a magic technique used to refine and transform souls. After all, souls had to be refined together with the puppet. Raw souls weren’t capable of being used. They must first undergo a particular method before they could be used for refinement.

As for that lizard-like mechanical beast from before, after Han Li refined his first independent thread of divine sense from the Great Development Technique, it was the first mechanical puppet he personally refined. As for the souls he used, they were yellow mice’s souls he conveniently acquired.

Before that happened, Han Li had already failed seven or eight times. His success rate was truly nothing to brag about.

But when Han Li sent his thread of separated consciousness into the puppet to control it, it felt incomparably wonderful! It felt far more responsive than operating magic tools, but it still wasn’t as genuine as moving one’s own limbs.

In reality, his thread of consciousness and this mechanical beast seemed to have the relationship of superior and subordinate. The puppet would act in accordance to any orders given through his thoughts. As for how the puppet specifically moved, the puppet would decide by itself. In addition, what the puppet was capable of seeing and hearing, Han Li was also able of clearly sensing it. This caused him to be greatly pleased.

The first time Han Li controlled a puppet, he felt a great childish and playful curiosity. Apart from the only elementary puppet beast he created, he also played around and operated a few higher grade mechanical puppets he had on hand. He got to fulfill his childhood dreams of playing with figurines.

As he controlled these puppets, Han Li gradually began to experience a few limitations of these puppets.

First, these puppets could only be controlled one and a half kilometers away from him. Any further from this distance and the mechanical puppet would be incapable of movement. Also, his thread of consciousness would return to him. Han Li guessed that this was the maximum distance his divided consciousness could be separated from his body. As his cultivation and primordial spirit improved, this limitation would also increase.

However, the next flaw was a deficiency of the puppet technique that he was unable to compensate for. When these puppets received their orders, there was a delay before they took action during which they were unable to move as they desired. In true combat, his opponent would very likely be able to take advantage of this flaw.

Even with these two flaws, this puppet technique was no trifling matter. By only further creating strands of divine sense and cultivating to the first layer of the Great Development Technique, he would be able to mutually contend with formidable Foundation Establishment characters.

After all, with over ten assistants at his side, even if they only had

the strength of Qi Condensation, it would be more than enough to strengthen his defense.

At the very least, if he were trapped again by that Ghost Spirit Sect young master, he wouldn't need to fear that endless army of blood ghosts as the actions of his low-grade mechanical puppets would only consume a few low-grade spirit stones.

Only that huge tiger puppet from the Thousand Bamboo School's Huang Long with its amazing strength would consume mid-grade spirit stones. However, Han Li reckoned that the puppet beast was of grade three or higher. It was capable of destroying a barrier created by several Foundation Establishment cultivations joining hands in two attacks. From this, its fearsome might could clearly be seen.

But unfortunately, his Martial Senior Lei used his magic treasure to turn that puppet into ashes. Else if Han Li had gotten hold of it, it would be an incomparably sharp trump card.

As he thought of the advantages of having that huge tiger puppet, Han Li began to set his heart on refining such a puppet.

After eventually refining several tens of elementary grade one puppets, Han Li decided to attempt to refine an elementary grade two puppet. This was something he had previously seen before, the main puppets the Thousand Bamboo School used to fight. So long as he was able to refine puppets of this grade, he wouldn't need to be scared of using up his puppets.

However, refining grade two puppets couldn't be done with scrap. It required nearly all the materials needed to create a high-grade magic tool. The most important material was a large quantity of ironwood several hundred years old. This particular material also cost the most.

Actually, if Han Li was in his Immortal's cave, nurturing ironwood of a particular age wasn't a problem at all. However, with his current responsibilities, Han Li could only painfully acquire it by having others gather a great amount for him from distant market cities.

Now that he had materials, he had to acquire an appropriate soul. After all, the soul of the most common animal inside the canyon, the yellow mouse, was far too weak. Even if he concentrated a bunch of their souls, it wouldn't produce a very remarkable improvement.

Thus, Han Li set his eyes on the yellow mouse's predator, the wasteland lizard.

As of this moment, Han Li had gone through three to four months of hard effort and had also created several strands of divine sense. Those several strands of consciousness had been used to control several low-grade puppet beasts to scour the entire wasteland for these lizards. Thus, the previous scene had occurred.

After Han Li put away the small bottle that contained the lizard's soul, he closed his eyes and continued to cultivate the "Great Development Technique", slowly strengthening his primordial spirit.

This “Great Development Technique” was crucial to using puppet techniques. Han Li didn’t dare to slack off!

However, the “Great Development Technique” truly deserved to be the core doctrine of the Thousand Bamboo School. It simply couldn’t be compared to common consciousness-splitting secret techniques!

Ordinary consciousness-splitting techniques merely split off a small portion of one’s divine sense through force. How many strands of divine sense that could be produced relied entirely on the strength of one’s primordial spirit. Moreover, these techniques were unable to bolster the primordial spirit.

The Great Development Technique made up for this deficiency. When it was cultivated, it gradually strengthened the primordial spirit to the point where it could even be as strong as naturally powerful primordial spirits. Furthermore, its method of splitting the divine sense was far more safe and exquisite than that of common techniques, allowing divisions of divine sense far finer and greater in number without hindering the primordial spirit.

With this comparison, it was no wonder the “[Great Development Technique](#)” was considered the core of Thousand Bamboo School’s teachings and why Senior Martial Brother Lin had constantly longed for the final three layers of the chant.

[TL: The Development 衍 in Great Development Technique 大衍决 can mean spread or overflow, explaining its specialization in creating threads of divided consciousnesses (divine sense).]

[TL: In chapter [232](#), Senior Martial Brother Lin pleaded for his life with the Great Development Technique after trying to take over Han Li's body.]

Chapter 265: War Situation

According to the “Great Development Technique”, after cultivating it to the first layer, splitting over ten strands of divine sense would be of no problem. After reaching the second layer, one could divide up to a hundred. Upon reaching to the third layer like “Senior Marial Brother Lin” had done, one could split their consciousness into several hundreds of strands.

When he thought of being able to control several hundreds of puppets in a battle after reaching the third layer, Han Li had felt a bit strange.

However, this abnormal feeling was due to Han Li being unstoppable among Foundation Establishment cultivators.

But once he reached Core Formation, he would have to refine several hundreds of puppets of grade three or higher, equivalent to the strength of Foundation Establishment cultivators. Otherwise, no matter how many he refined, they would be unable to withstand a Core Formation cultivator’s attack. That scene where Fatty Lei had swept away several hundreds of the Thousand Bamboo School’s grade two puppets was still clear in his mind!

Since refining each grade two puppet required the materials for a high-grade magic tool, to refine an even higher grade puppet would require materials for a top-grade magic tool at the very least!

As such, if Core Formation cultivators who cultivated the puppet

technique wished to suppress other Core Formation cultivators of the same strength, they would have to spend enough materials for several hundreds of top-grade magic tools at the very least. From this thought, Han Li could not help but be apprehensive for a long while!

Not to mention the materials that would be wasted from refinement failure, as well finding hundreds of strong enough souls.

This was also a major reason so few knew of the Thousand Bamboo School's puppet technique.

After all, a sect's strength was evaluated on the number of Core Formation cultivators it possessed. With regards to battles between Core Formation cultivators, the Thousand Bamboo School was powerless while other sects thrived. Even if their Foundation Establishment disciples were ferocious, they could only hole themselves up in a single region and become a mere local hegemon.

Naturally, this was just some speculation from Han Li after he cultivated the Great Development Technique and the puppet techniques!

However, this puppet technique would cause Han Li's strength as a Foundation Establishment cultivator to substantially increase. This fact wasn't false in the least! As of now, Han Li couldn't be bothered with future deficiencies.

After all, this great war stirred across the cultivation worlds of several countries had just started!

Not long after Han Li started guarding this spirit stone mine, a great ambush had unfolded at some desolate desert mountain between the Six Devil Dao Sects and the Seven Sects of the State of Yue.

Han Li gradually came to know the specific circumstances. Originally, Spirit Beast Mountain of the Seven Sects was actually a branch of Devil Dao's Controlling Spirit Sect, but the neutral sect had secretly eliminated the Devil Dao's intermediaries several thousand years ago and buried them in the State of Yue.

As for this invasion of the State of Yue, the Devil Dao had planned to take advantage of their formal relationship and hoped to use the same tactic they had used to seize the State of Jiang and Che Ji to great effect.

But who could have known that the ancestors of Spirit Beast Mountain had passed on their unwillingness to be part of the Controlling Spirit Sect to their descendants through the past thousands of years? They were absolutely unwilling to have another overlord suddenly appear above their heads.

As a result, after Spirit Beast Mountain released this information to the other six sects, they used an unknown method to convince the Devil Dao sects to attack a stronghold of Seven Sect cultivators.

As they mounted a raid with several thousand cultivators, they

were ambushed by a great number of Seven Sect cultivators on route. With the Seven Sect's absolute advantage, the Devil Dao suffered a great loss, even losing two Core Formation cultivators during the fight.

This was a great blow to the Six Devil Dao Sects, and naturally it was greatly celebrated by the Seven Sects of the State of Yue, greatly boosting their morale. Humiliated, the Six Devil Dao Sects flew into a rage and began their large-scale assault.

Not to be outdone, the Seven Sects laid out their defensive formations.

Among the common border shared by the State of Yue and the States of Jiang and Che Ji, over ten great battles had occurred there, resulting in the deaths of over ten thousand cultivators. With the additional deaths of seven or eight Core Formation cultivators, the battles had been extremely desperate!

On the day a few cultivators came to pick up spirit stones, they told the guards this with lingering fear. This caused Han Li and other cultivators who heard this to become extremely apprehensive, secretly rejoicing at not needing to fight in the war. Just by seeing how many Core Formation cultivators died in battle, one could imagine how dreadful the situation has become!

However, the Six Devil Dao Sects were one of the two great powers in the Heavenly South Region. Their strength truly couldn't be compared to the likes of the cultivation world of the State of Yue.

After seven or eight battles, the Seven Sects clearly understood they would not be able to continuously withstand the opposition's fierce assault. If the Seven Sects didn't prepare and establish great restriction formations in advance as cornerstones of their desperate struggle, they would be defeated without much resistance.

But even if this were the case, the Seven Sects wouldn't be able to withstand for long.

During this time of certain crisis for the State of Yue, the Seven Sects had sent requests to the cultivators of the mid-level States of Yuan Wu and Zi Jin to come to their aid.

Before the Seven Sects had started their war against the Six Devil Dao Sects, it turned that they had already wisely sent eloquent messengers to the two country's sects to request aid.

When the cultivation sects of these two countries received these letters, they were naturally afraid that after the Devil Dao seized the State of Yue, their countries would be the next ones to be taken over. Without having the messengers spend time pleading, they agreed to provide aid. Joined together against a common enemy, the two countries sent a majority of their cultivators to provide assistance during that starry night.

This new alliance greatly reduced the disparity in strength between the State of Yue and the Six Devil Dao Sects. By relying on the protection of their powerful great formations, they were able

to firmly resist the Devil Dao's assault.

As such, the Six Devil Dao Sects' plan to seize the State of Yue in a single burst was naturally shattered. The war sunk into a deadlock and became a battle of attrition.

As a result, large decisive battles became less frequent while smaller scale surprise attacks at the rear occurred in great number on both sides, particularly at locations where materials and spirit stones were produced. These raids eventually became the primary objective of the Seven Sects and Devil Dao.

Perhaps the warfront was too far away, but this specific spirit stone mine had not yet suffered an enemy attack. This was nothing short of a miracle! After all, other equivalently-sized spirit stone mines had all already suffered three to four raids.

But the more the raids occurred, the more the Seven Sects became ill at ease. Half a month later, a group of twenty cultivators were dispatched as support, headed by a late Foundation Establishment cultivator.

Thus, the spirit stone mine naturally became far stronger! However, like a mountain longs for rain, Han Li felt a desire to cultivate the Great Development Technique even more diligently. The distance to break through to the first layer was still far away.

Among the second group of Qi Condensation disciples to come, Han Li unexpectedly came across an acquaintance, that ugly man Zhong Wu he previously met at the Trial by Blood and Fire.

Zhong Wu also recognized Han Li.

However, now that Han Li had a cultivation base at Foundation Establishment, his expression darkened all over, switching between shock, envy, admiration, as well as many other emotions. Seeing him once again truly astonished Han Li.

Finally, Zhong Wu bitterly smiled. He saluted Han Li in advance and somewhat unwillingly called him “Senior”.

Resisting a smile with difficulty, Han Li insipidly replied.

When Han Li thought of Zhong Wu’s many changing expressions as he sat in meditation, he couldn’t help but knowingly smile and opened his eyes. At this moment, his mood was truly unsuitable for cultivating the Great Development Technique; he would continue when his heart became tranquil!

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Time passed by quickly. Spending a small portion of time on guard duty and the majority of his time cultivating the Great Development Technique and refining mechanical puppet beasts, a month passed for Han Li. During this time, Han Li could clearly feel that he was on the verge of breaking through the first layer of the Great Development Technique.

This caused Han Li to be pleasantly surprised!

With regards to Han Li's cultivation of Five Element Daoist magic and the Azure Essence Sword Art, his aptitude toward them was shown to be inferior! However, he was able to cultivate this Great Development Technique extremely smoothly and without the slightest difficulty, feeling as if success flowed naturally. In addition to feeling happiness, Han Li also felt awe in his heart!

As for this first grade two mechanical puppet, after failing over ten times, he finally refined it two days ago. Although it was a bit crude when compared to the puppets of the Thousand Bamboo School and its strength was rather inferior, it caused Han Li to beam with happiness. After preparing materials brought to him by other cultivators, he started refining them in great quantity.

But today, just as Han Li was sitting in meditation in a quiet room, he heard an extremely sharp whistle from the outside. Then people loudly yelled, "Not good! The Devil Dao is attacking! Prepare to fight!"

Han Li's heart trembled. His expression became solemn as he left the quiet room.

At this moment, the Seven Sect cultivators who were originally meditating and resting in the cave solemnly walked out just as Han Li had. After they mutually looked at each other, they walked out of the cave dwelling one after another.

The Masked Moon Sect's late Foundation Establishment Xuan Ye and Spirit Beast Mountain's Lu Tianmeng were expressionlessly

floating underneath the offensive formations and looked up from the great canyon.

Over ten cultivators who were on duty stood behind him with anxious and frightened expressions. But after they saw Han Li and the others coming to support them, they became far more calm.

Han Li followed Xuan Ye's gaze and looked up from the great canyon. As expected, there were traces of enemies, about twenty or thirty assailants.

However, Han Li clearly understood that since the enemy had dared perform a raid from such a distance, it was likely that they were all at late Foundation Establishment; they wouldn't have brought any Qi Condensation disciples to weigh them down.

Thus, in terms of strength, they were absolutely weak in comparison! This battle was not likely to go very well!

Chapter 266: Fierce Battle

Han Li's side had nine Foundation Establishment cultivators and over sixty Qi Condensation disciples. Although they were a bit weaker than the opposition, they had the Four Fiend Formation, so it wasn't as if they were completely defenseless.

As a result, Xuan Ye called out, having Han Li and the other cultivators hide near the Four Fiend Formations and observe the enemy's movements.

At this moment, Han Li was able to take a distinct look at the Devil Dao attackers.

They were all wearing either red or yellow robes. It seemed they were cultivators from two sects.

Standing at the forefront were an ordinary-looking red-robed young woman and an old yellow-robed man who appeared to be sixty to seventy years old. Their cultivation wasn't particularly special, one being at early Foundation Establishment and the other at late Foundation Establishment. They were talking to each other with slight smiles on their faces.

"Be careful. These people are from the Devil Flame Sect and the Heavenly Fiend Sect." Lu Tianmeng, being the only one who had experienced multiple encounters with the Six Devil Dao Sects, said this to the other cultivators with great caution as if he felt great fear towards the people from these two sects.

When the Han Li and the other cultivators heard this, their expressions naturally grew increasingly serious.

At this moment, the young red clothed woman stopped chatting, turned her head, and insipidly said a few words.

Because Han Li and the others were too far away, they weren't able to hear very clearly what she said, but her words made the red-robed cultivators behind the young woman move forward before slowly flying down toward the canyon's four offensive formations.

At this moment, the yellow-robed old man also silently waved his hand, and his yellow-robed cultivators became streaks of yellow light that headed toward the Four Fiend Formation. Within the formation, Han Li and the others unknowingly held their breaths and impatiently revealed their magic tools.

These yellow-robed cultivators naturally didn't foolishly charge straight into the formation. Instead, they stopped about a hundred meters away from the Four Fiend Formation. Then, magic tools flew out, aggressively throwing themselves at the great formation.

The collisions of the magic tools' wondrous light and the Four Fiend Formation's azure, red, blue, and yellow-colored restrictions released waves of thunderous explosions, causing the expressions of the Seven Sect cultivators underneath to slightly change.

“Half of you will go out to deal with those Heavenly Fiend cultivators. Do not let them break the great formation! The other

half, be on guard against the Devil Flame Sect cultivators!” The Masked Moon Sect’s Xuan Le muttered to himself for a moment before decisively giving his orders.

Then a small pure white sword flew out of the formation and turned into a streak of white light, obstructing a flying saber as well as bead magic tools.

Hearing those words, a team of cultivators followed Xuan Ye and also released several of their own magic tools, obstructing most of the opponent’s offense. Han Li was naturally one of these people. With flawless proficiency, he released his “Golden Beetle Swarm Blades” to form a net of golden light, trapping a long azure spear magic tool.

Because Han Li had chosen to battle the owner of the magic tool, who had the same level of cultivation as he did, the battle seemed extremely tense as golden light and azure streaks danced about. But in fact, Han Li was easily in control and had the time to take a look at other areas of the battlefield.

The situation appeared to be handled!

The cultivators at Han Li’s side were mostly Qi Condensation disciples. Their magic tools could not compete with their enemies’. Only with the cooperation of five or six members would they barely be able to resist the attack of a single Foundation Establishment cultivator. But because they were underneath the protection of a great formation, these cultivators were able to dodge into the formation during a time of crisis and avoid death. As for the other Foundation Establishment cultivators, they

naturally were the same as Han Li, each blocking a yellow-robed cultivator in a dazzling light show.

“So this is the strength of the Six Devil Dao Sects.”

Han Li felt this was a bit strange. If their enemy's strength were as such, then how could defending the spirit stone mines prove to be such a problem!

Just as he thought this, the red-robed cultivators from the Devil Flame Sect eventually arrived beside the Four Fiend Formation. This caused Lu Tianmeng and the cultivators that had yet to act to diligently pay attention to them. A few of the younger Seven Sect cultivators were somewhat eager to act.

The red-robed cultivators didn't immediately enter the fight. Instead, they stood in a strange formation. Following a command, they all took out a fiery red banner with a Golden Crow on a scorching sun, releasing a brilliant red light. From a single look, one could tell this was no ordinary object.

“Not good! These people are Wild Flame cultivators! They want to release an Azure Sun Devil Flame. Quickly block them!”

When Lu Tianmeng saw these red-robed cultivators act so calmly, he felt an ill premonition in his heart. As they stood in a battle formation and each took out a banner, he suddenly recalled an astonishing scene he witnessed from the day he fought in a great battle against the six sects. He couldn't help but shout with a whitened complexion.

This Spirit Beast Mountain cultivator then instantly rushed out of the formation and hastily reached for the storage pouch at his waist, immediately releasing two flying centipedes about a meter long.

These two centipedes were covered in sinister black and yellow stripes and sprouted dark green translucent wings. Under Lu Tianmeng's hurried whistles, they charged toward the red-robed individuals with an ominous light emitting from their eyes.

Upon hearing these words, although the other Seven Sect cultivators that had yet to act did not know what "Wild Flame cultivators" and "Azure Sun Devil Flame" were, they knew that since it was able to cause their late Foundation Establishment captain to become bewildered, it was no small matter, so they did not hesitate to follow his orders.

The other Foundation Establishment cultivators followed closely behind Lu Tianmeng and also sent their magic tools after the two centipedes towards the red-robed cultivators.

At this moment, more than ten Wild Flame cultivators were still chanting as they held the large banners without moving in the slightest, turning a blind eye to the attacking cultivators. This caused Lu Tianmeng and the other cultivators to grow greatly excited.

The very first to arrive in front of the Devil Flame Sect cultivators were one of the two flying centipedes. It opened its

mouth and ruthlessly sprayed out dark green poisonous gas.

But at this moment, something shocking had occurred.

With the green poisonous gas having not yet left the huge centipede's mouth, several slender streaks of silver light flickered from its body. Its body then suddenly fell to pieces, having been cut by the streaks of light.

Without waiting for the Seven Sect cultivators to recover from their shock, the same scene immediately occurred to the other centipede. This caused Lu Tianmeng's expression to greatly change, and he hastily stopped moving. He then took out a small shield and placed it in front of his body.

Overwhelmed with shock, the several cultivators behind him also took out defensive magic tools and defensive talismans, fearing they would meet a similar end as the centipedes.

However, something even more outrageous occurred!

Just as the few magic tools that had closely followed behind the centipede began their attack, an abundance of fine silver strings appeared in front of them, tightly wrapping around them without allowing the slightest of movements.

The Seven Sect cultivators that had just left the great formation looked at each other in dismay. In a moment, they no longer knew what to do!

“Quickly use the Spirit Light Technique. There are others in front of those red-robed cultivators, hidden by some sort of secret concealment art!” After a flashing blue light from his eyes, a cultivator who had experienced a loss of a magic tool shouted this out with shock.

These words caused the other cultivators to suddenly come to a realization. However, only Foundation Establishment cultivators could use the Spirit Light Technique. Qi Condensation disciples could only helplessly watch!

Han Li also used the Spirit Light Technique to look at that location!

He had seen the entire previous scene and was shocked by no small amount! Now that he was reminded to use the Spirit Light technique, he saw several indistinct white silhouettes in front of the Devil Flame Sect cultivators that were holding the banner. These figures held a long slender sword-like weapon in one hand and controlled a thin silver thread in the other, restraining the magic tools.

At this moment, after Lu Tianmeng and the other cultivators had discovered the white silhouettes, they did not hesitate to attack with all sorts of magic tools and magic techniques, suppressing the white silhouettes. However, those white silhouettes held on tenaciously. Regardless of what magic tool or Daoist magic was used, they seemed to cause no large injuries to the white silhouettes as if they simply had immortal bodies.

But fortunately, the white silhouettes could only use one hand to slice and the other to tangle. With a bit of careful dodging from the Seven Sect's side, the silhouettes only method of attack was neutralized!

“What sort of crafty thing is this?”

Han Li exclaimed in great surprise! These silhouettes obviously weren't those of ordinary humans. Could they be refined sacrificial ghost spirits?

As he thoughtfully pondered this, he commanded the golden blades in front of him. This careless attitude finally offended the middle-aged Heavenly Fiend cultivator!

As the cultivator commanded the azure spear to tangle with Han Li's golden blades with a darkened face, he noiselessly patted his storage pouch. A continuously spinning white bead suddenly flew from it.

After this bead charged out, it grew to the size of a room as it flew, fiercely striking toward Han Li's head.

Even though Han Li wasn't paying much attention, how could he not notice such large movements from the enemy?

He calmly chopped his hand through the air, and an azure sword streak several meters long flew from his hand towards the bead. The sword streak chopped against the bead and was unable to

advance for the moment.

Then, Han Li took out his “Black Dragon’s Gasp from his storage pouch. As the sword streak was on the verge of collapse, it took its place and formed a deadlock with the bead. This caused the Heavenly Fiend cultivator to become extremely angry, but he had no other option at the moment!

“Not good!”

Lu Tianmeng’s extremely anxious shout caused Han Li’s heart to tremble. He hastily looked to the side and noticed that the red-robed cultivators had stopped chanting. At the same time, they lifted their banners into the air. The top of the banner began to faintly emit an azure flame.

“So that’s the Azure Sun Devil Flame.” Han Li widely opened his eyes and rigidly stared at the azure flame, feeling a bit restless.

Seeing the opponent finish casting their magic, Lu Tianmeng’s heart completely sunk! However, he wasn’t even close to breaking through the white silhouettes before him!

Chapter 267: Flaunting The Power Of Devil Fire

“Retreat! Everyone, retreat to the great formation!” Lu Tianmeng yelled in a moment of desperation after seeing the azure flames on those large flags grow thicker and thicker, then took the lead to fall back, fleeing towards the large formation behind him.

Hearing this, the cultivators next to him immediately instinctively followed their captain and retreated.

Xuan Le did not hesitate and similarly ordered a retreat.

However, the cultivators on Han Li’s side, apart from a few cultivators who had a steady advantage and could retreat at any time, were all entangled by the opponents’ ferocity and had no way of escaping. Han Li’s opponent similarly mounted a ferocious offensive, attempting to contain Han Li.

However, Han Li coldly laughed. After retrieving his other magic tools, he tossed out the White Scales Shield, forcefully blocking the opponents’ attacks and easily returning to the great formation. The Heavenly Fiend Sect’s cultivators could only bitterly watch and stop their footsteps outside of the formation.

Seeing that more than half of his unit was stuck outside the formation, unable to escape, Xuan Li began to fight even more fiercely, knowing in his heart that the situation was not good. But just as he wanted to go assist the other cultivators, Lu Tianmeng instantly pulled him back the moment he began to move.

“It’s already too late! The Azure Sun Devil Fire has already been summoned!” Lu Tianmeng said with an ashen expression, shaking his head.

Upon hearing this, Han Li finally noticed that between the flags of the red-robed flag bearers, azure flames had already shot out. Ten or so flame columns shot into the air, converging into a giant azure fireball tens of meters in diameter, gently floating in midair and swaying imposingly; it was incredibly eye-catching.

“This?”

After being startled, Xuan Le was about to say something. However, the following movements from those red-robed cultivators immediately caused his expression to become extremely ugly.

Those red-robed individuals pointed the tips of the flags at the Seven Great Sects cultivators who had been entangled outside of the formation. Instantly, the huge fireball became ten or so smaller fireballs about a meter wide with a “pu”, shooting directly towards these cultivators.

The speed of those azure fireballs was incredibly frightening. In the time it took to blink, they had already aggressively flown in front of the cultivators from the Seven Great Sects.

Naturally, these people had long discovered the transformation of the large fireball; they all instinctively used various kinds of

magic tools to receive the attacks of the azure fireballs. An extremely low number of them used a few talismans to execute Daoist magic in an attempt shoot them down.

Unfortunately, because these azure flames were the so-called “Azure Sun Devil Flames”, they were extremely frightening!

Regardless of whether it was the magic tools or the Daoist magics, as soon as they encountered the azure fireball, they were like moths in a flame, silently melting away completely.

Seeing this unbelievable scene, the faces of those cultivators became as deathly pale as snow!

Before they could think carefully about it, ten or so fireballs simultaneously slammed into them. The protective barriers and similar magic spells were all completely destroyed upon contact. Furthermore, their bodies instantly became reduced to nothing under the demonic fire, not even leaving a single trace behind.

After seeing this massacre, how could the remaining cultivators who had not been hit dare to hesitate at all! Either they had been gravely wounded by the Heavenly Fiend Sect cultivators or they simply dropped the tangled-up magic tools, directly fleeing towards the great formation.

However, two or three people panicked, and they immediately died under their opponents’ magic tools.

In this way, the Seven Great Sects cultivators defending the spirit stone mine had suffered the deaths of nearly ten Qi Condensation disciples and one Foundation Establishment cultivator. As soon as they brushed against the enemy, their losses were very great!

However, the Azure Sun Devil Flame's might was not limited to this!

Under the guidance of the red-robed cultivators, those azure fireballs became one entity once again, directly becoming a sea of flames that rushed towards the Four Fiend Formation.

At this moment, the expressions on the faces of the ones hiding inside the formation drastically changed, and a fear spread through all of the cultivators.

Seeing this, Xuan Le knit his eyebrows and straightforwardly asked Lu Tianmeng:

Senior Martial Brother Lu, what's going on with these azure flames? How can Foundation Establishment cultivators release such frightening True Fire? This great formation's restriction ability should be able to block the attack of the flames, right?

Lu Tianmeng couldn't help but begin to bitterly laugh after hearing the other person's string of questions. However, upon seeing that all the other cultivators were attentively watching him, he could only helplessly explain:

“To tell the truth to you all, when I, Lu, was battling in the warfront, I only occasionally witnessed this Azure Sun Devil Flame’s fearfulness! As for whether or not it can break the Four Fiend Formation, I have no way of guessing! Only, I heard afterwards from a senior that this kind of demonic fire cannot be carelessly released; not only are these Wild Flame cultivators required to cultivate in this kind of Azure Sun Devil Flame technique, every time they release it they pay a price in lowering their own cultivation bases. That’s why it’s so difficult to defend against!”

These words from Lu Tianmeng caused Xuan Le and the other cultivators to glance at each other, revealing dispirited expressions!

At this time, the fierce azure flames finally slammed into the four-colored restrictions of the great formation; a low rumbling sound, like an explosion, sounded out, immediately attracting the attention of all the cultivators present.

They saw that the azure waves incessantly slammed against the four-colored light barrier, wave after wave, causing the light barrier to ripple nonstop. However, in the end it blocked these frightening demonic flames, causing the Seven Sects cultivators in the formation to let out a sigh of relief.

However, Han Li and the others did not relax for long before they were on edge once again.

That was because as time went on, the four-colored light barrier was already slowly dimming under the repeated onslaught of the

vicious azure flames; clearly, this was a sign that the great formation was about to shatter. And although those red-clothed people were also drenched with sweat, waving their large flags, they definitely had no problem in holding out for a while.

All of the cultivators inside the formation now began to furiously rack their brains on ways to retreat and get out of there!

Based on the circumstances of the other spirit stone mines that had been ambushed, although the Seven Sects cultivators who fell into the hands of the Devil Dao were not immediately killed, they would be immediately escorted to the enemy. Who knew how they would be dealt with after being as hostages?

However, the hatred built up between the Seven Sects and the Six Devil Dao Sects after their consecutive battles could be likened to a deep sea! How could either side treat their hostages well? This concern was especially made worse since the opponent often practiced the inhumane method of extracting one's soul; this caused the Seven Sects cultivators to feel even more uneasy!

Thus, unless there was no other way out, no one would bring up the matter of surrender.

“I know of a tunnel directly leading to a location around ten miles away. That should be enough for us to escape alive!” The elder Yu Xing, who had been standing guard here for ten or so years, suddenly said with a peaceful expression.

Like a large boulder creating huge waves, these words instantly

shocked Xuan Le and the other cultivators, then exciting them immediately afterwards.

“Martial Brother Yu, is this really true?”

“Great, now we can finally escape!”

“We’re saved!”

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The Seven Sects cultivators who were originally panicking, in the time it takes to roll one’s eyes, suddenly became much more lively, unable to contain their joy.

Han Li was also rather happy. After all, he truly had no way to deal with those Azure Sun Devil Flames. Even if he were to go all out, he wouldn’t know where to start.

Xuan Le and Lu Tianmeng restrained the excitement in their hearts and, after confirming again the veracity of the tunnel from Yu Xing’s mouth, hesitated for a moment before issuing the order to retreat!

As for the spirit stone mine, they wouldn’t have to worry about it; at most, the opponents would destroy the tunnel entrance, halting the production of spirit stones. The Devil Dao cultivators wouldn’t even be able to take away any of the spirit stones inside the mine. Even the mortals who worked the mines wouldn’t

normally be injured in the battle.

Thus, all they needed to do was make themselves scarce and slip away.

Under Yu Xing's lead, Han Li and the other fifty or so cultivators guarding the mine entered a certain underground tunnel in the spirit stone mine. However, just when they entered the underground tunnel, everyone felt the entire canyon tremble for a moment.

“The Four Fiend Formation has been broken through!” Xuan Le cried out a deadpan expression.

Instantly, the cultivators sped up their footsteps even more.

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The inside of the tunnel was lit up by the many moonlight stones in the cultivators' hands. One could tell from the potholed walls of the tunnel that it was man-made, causing all of the cultivators to feel somewhat shocked.

Based on Yu Xing's brief overview, this tunnel was originally an extremely long spirit stone vein. It had been carved out by the miners as they progressed along the vein, harvesting the spirit stones. It eventually led to another exit.

Thankfully, this tunnel existed and Yu Xing remembered it.

Otherwise, they really would have had nowhere to escape today!

These words caused the other cultivators to repeatedly nod their heads in agreement.

But just at this moment, the tunnel suddenly began to shake violently. After a few loud rumbles, it began to slowly fall apart.

Countless clumps of dirt and huge stones rained on the frightened cultivators, directly burying them. The entire underground world became pitch black once again.

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After many hours, at a certain stone wall in a naturally-occurring underground cave, a large hole suddenly opened up with a “huala”. Next, a lizard-like puppet beast rushed out of the hole, stretching its head to size up its surroundings. It then jumped back into the hole.

After the time it takes to cook a meal, the lizard mechanical beast jumped out again from the stone wall, only this time a person crawled out as well, closely following behind. This was none other than Han Li, who had encountered the collapse yet managed to survive the disaster.

Han Li stood up, and glanced at the surroundings, his face revealing a joyful expression. He had just received a new lease on life!

Chapter 268: White Spider

Han Li was currently in a stalactite cave open from all sides. Although he did not know how big it truly was, it absolutely couldn't have been small.

After Han Li took a look in every direction with a moonlight stone in hand, he had come to that conclusion.

In the split second when the tunnel collapsed into dirt and falling stones, Han Li quickly flew and activated his protective barrier. As a result, although he was deeply buried underneath the earth from the series of tremors, he still had the leeway to take deep breaths and move slowly.

However, the earth tremors were too great, and Han Li no longer knew where he was, incapable of identifying his direction. He had no choice but to release several lizard puppet beasts he had on hand and have them simultaneously dig in different directions, hoping to find a way out.

At this moment, he felt great regret for not having previously learned the Earth Evasion Technique. If he had, he could just smoothly shuttle through the earth. Now, he could only have his puppet beasts move forward as he slowly crawled.

As for using magic tools to open a path, Han Li completely rejected it as soon as he thought of it.

Under the current circumstances, negligently squandering magic

power was not wise, especially without knowing a clear route. Furthermore, using magic tools while underneath the earth was truly far too dangerous! With a single mistake, he would be caught in another collapse.

As such, Han Li first controlled several puppets and scouted everything within a certain range once through before choosing the mostly likely route to escape from. Like this, after many hours of dull crawling, he eventually arrived at this mysterious stalactite cave. This caused Han Li's completely taut heart to thoroughly relax.

The feeling of surviving a calamity was truly wonderful!

Han Li turned his head to look at the hole he just crawled out of. He was certain there were others who had also managed to preserve their life while trapped underneath the collapsed tunnel, but whether or not they were able to find a path to life was hard to say!

Because they were trapped in an airtight area, even if they were Foundation Establishment cultivators, they wouldn't last for very long. Qi Condensation disciples were even less likely to survive!

However, while Han Li was rejoicing in his fortune, he felt a bit puzzled.

How could it be that soon after they entered the tunnel, the tunnel would collapse from an earthquake? Could it be the Devil Dao had arranged ghosts to cause this? Han Li felt that this guess

was most likely true.

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On the surface, the Devil Dao cultivators had just greatly damaged the spirit stone mine's opening, using magic tools to completely smash the cave within to pieces.

High up above the spirit stone mine, yellow-robed old man was facing the red-robed young woman, regretfully saying,

“Junior Martial Sister Lian, you are treating this small problem greatly! Just to get a few stray dogs, you used an earth-shaking talisman, an extremely rare mid-grade talisman!”

“Humph! To run away from me, Lian Feihua, how could it be so easy! Although rooting out this spirit stone mine happened to be just an insignificant mission, to truly let them run away so easily makes me feel ill at ease!” The red-robed young woman slanted her mouth, saying this without concern.

When the yellow-robed man heard this, he didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Using this to justify wasting a rare talisman, it was truly too ridiculous! But even so, she was the Devil Flame Sect Master's only daughter! Sigh, he was only a Heavenly Fiend Sect Enforcer. He should just mind his own business.

With this thought, the old man shut his mouth and kept quiet.

Not long after, the spirit stone mine was completely destroyed by the Devil Dao cultivators. They flew away, eventually flying off into the horizon.

After a day, a huge Seven Sects medicine cultivation yard hidden rather far from this place was raided by the same group! They stole all the medicinal herbs that could be used and cleanly set the saplings ablaze with Azure Sun Devil Fire!

This matter immediately seized the hearts of the Seven Sects' upper echelon. With comparison to the spirit stone mine Han Li had guarded, it was insignificant. By using only a bit of time, the mine would be restored. However, the plundered and burned spiritual herbs needed several tens of years to grow again.

The Seven Sects' upper echelon furiously dispatched experts to pursue and kill them. But who would have thought that the enemy would meet with reinforcements or that the Seven Sects would suffer a small loss from the ambush?

With such continuous losses, the Seven Sects naturally wouldn't submit to humiliation! After recovering a bit of strength, they took the initiative to begin a second wave of large-scale battles, once more opening another prelude.

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Underground, Han Li wrinkled his brow. He finally identified the direction of the wind within the cave. He had his puppet beasts find the path forward as he crawled after them.

After passing through several tens of caverns, the stalactite caves became larger and larger. The largest cavern could fit over a hundred people without problem. The further he moved, the stronger the wind flow, which caused Han Li to be a bit more at ease. After all, with wind, there would be an opening to the surface.

Just as Han Li entered a new cavern, he ran into six or seven people. They were Yuan Le, Lu Tianfeng, and other cultivators. Unexpectedly, Zhong Wu was there as well.

When they saw Han Li alongside two puppet beasts, they blankly stared with surprise.

But soon after, as Xuan Ye smiled and thought of saying something, a mournful scream came from the other direction, causing everyone's expression to change, revealing fright.

Without inquiring anything from Han Li, Xuan Ye and Lu Tianmeng looked at each other and immediately followed the scream with hastened steps. No one dared to be negligent, applying all sorts of defensive magic techniques and magic tools as a precaution.

When Han Li saw this, he hesitated for a moment. In the end, he took out his white scale shield and slowly followed. However, he

didn't use a defensive magic technique. This way, he would be able to use both the Imperial Flight Technique and soft body movements. He always believed that in narrow quarters, speed was more important than defense.

After they passed through three or four large caverns, they arrived at a huge stalactite cave and suddenly saw a frightful scene before them.

At the center of the cavern, a sparkling crystal white spider over ten meters large was using its huge sharp teeth to bite at a badly mutilated corpse. The corpse was wearing white clothes, clearly revealing its former identity as a Masked Moon Sect disciple who had managed to flee from being buried alive. Near the corpse, there were three or four thoroughly worn-out magic tools.

But what was most noticeable was the huge spirit stone vein behind the spider. Surrounding it was an extremely ancient hexagonal transportation formation. To the side of the transportation formation, there was a rainbow-colored skeleton sitting cross-legged in meditation, levitating a meter into the air. Its hand was grasping a lustrous blue command medallion that was radiating faintly.

“What is this?”

After a Qi Condensation cultivator swallowed his spit, he dryly asked. No one knew if he was asking about this monstrous spider, the transportation formation, or the skeleton with the command medallion. Naturally, no one answered.

Perhaps it was because this person's voice had alarmed the spider, but the monster suddenly stopped gnawing. It raised its head and glared at the party that had invaded its cavern with an ice cold gaze.

This caused Han Li's and the other cultivator's hearts to tremble as they hastily prepared to fight.

But a moment after this monster took a glance, it lowered its head and continued to gnaw at the corpse, turning a blind eye to the crowd of people. This caused everyone to look at each other in dismay!

“Die!”

When a Masked Moon Sect cultivator saw his fellow sect member had died at the jaws of this spider, he felt grieved from his death and raised his hand, fiercely throwing a flaming dart magic tool toward the spider.

This caused Lu Tianmeng and the other experienced people to jump in fright, inwardly cursing this person's imprudence.

“Peng” The clear sound rang out as the flying dart struck the head of the spider, which hadn't attempted to dodge in the slightest. Unexpectedly, it bounced back. Not the slightest trace of damage could be seen on the insect beast. Furthermore, the point of the dart had become slightly bent.

The other cultivators' eyes nearly dropped from their sockets. This spider's outer carapace was actually this hard...it was far too ridiculous!

“Everyone, attack!”

Xuan Ye fiercely glanced at that rash fellow sect member and had no better option than to call for everyone to simultaneously attack. This was because that spider had already stopped eating and was slowly walking towards them.

After these words were said, over ten magic tools flew out at the same time. They all struck the huge spider with all sorts of divine powers. Han Li had also sent out his golden blades.

At this moment, underneath the dazzling barrage of attacks, the spider's body had become completely covered by strong light, almost as if it had been instantly killed by those attacks. But after the sounds of clatter were heard, the brilliance of the magic tools' attack had dimmed. Five or six lower grade magic tools even completely lost their spiritual properties, falling to the ground.

When Han Li and the other cultivators saw this, they turned pale with fright. They each took the same action, drawing their gazes to their magic tools.

In the end, the top-grade magic tools were still in good condition. However, the high-grade magic tools suffered heavy damage. As for the lower grade magic tools, they fell to the floor. Once again,

the slightest trace of damage couldn't be seen on the white spider, which continued to leisurely crawl towards them.

“Withdraw!”

After Li Tianmeng and Xuan Ye looked at each other, they both happened to shout the same word.

Although they were a bit curious about the transportation formation and the command medallion, the price to kill that demonic monster was far too high. Furthermore, the return to the surface was far more important.

But during this time, the white spider opened its mouth, and a shining white liquid sprayed out everywhere.

After seeing the fearsomeness of this monster, who dared to be so stupid as to touch this unknown liquid? Everyone similarly flashed to either side.

“Not good!” Han Li came to a realization after thinking of something and couldn't help but cry out.

The other cultivators were slightly startled; they hadn't fully realized what just happened.

The liquid suddenly turning into a huge net. The spider then pounced at the cave opening and stood on the web. Much to their surprise, it tightly sealed the entrance they had just used to enter.

The other cultivators' expressions changed. At this moment, they discovered that this stalactite cave seemed to only have one exit!

Chapter 269: Blood Red

“Could it be it wishes to eliminate us in one stroke?” Zhong Wu asked with a white complexion.

“Humph!”

Xuan Ye didn't speak and raised his hand instead. Seven to eight fireballs flew from his hand, shooting toward the dense spiderweb.

Peng peng! The spiderweb was left completely intact. Not even the slightest sign of a burn could be seen.

At this moment, the others weren't surprised. They had clearly anticipated that this spiderweb wasn't so fragile.

During this moment, the white spider slightly bent its legs, and with ferocious power, it pounced straight toward Xuan Ye's direction with its entire body.

Xuan Ye's expression darkened. He pressed a yellow talisman against the ground, and immediately after, it noiselessly dissolved into floor.

Subsequently, a huge stone spike sharply rose not far away, precisely hitting the abdomen of the spider as it leaped in midair. The spider was rigidly pinned to the roof of the cavern, incapable of moving for the time being.

“Good!”

When Lu Tianmeng saw this, he loudly shouted and revealed an expression of happiness.

Then, he threw out a dark green bag with the bag's opening pointed at the spider at the ceiling, revealing faint warm light.

At this moment, the spider trapped at the cavern ceiling started hissing. It drew its legs towards its abdomen and held the stone spike tightly. Then it fiercely exerted force.

The sounds of crashing stones were heard. The tip of the stone spike had actually been easily crushed into countless falling stones.

After recovering its freedom, the demonic beast jumped down. When it had broken the stone spike's tip, its small eyes flickered with green light as if it were angered.

It lowered its body and then straightened it. It seemed to want to pounce toward the cultivators once again.

But at this moment, the warm light rushed out from the bag and precisely swept away the spider as it was midair. Then as quick as lightning, the light returned, with it the spider that had unexpectedly shrunk as it was collected into the bag.

Han Li and the others at the side were startled. Such a seemingly ferocious spider had actually been so easily captured alive. This

was truly hard to imagine.

Lu Tianmeng also wore an expression of pleasant surprise.

Although the might of his “Sun and Moon Pouch” was quite considerable, it had already been used many times to collect a large number of demonic beasts. Even so, it was still able to smoothly capture this spider, which caused him to be greatly surprised. Feelings of ecstasy then began to rise in his heart. If he could tame such a demonic beast, wouldn’t his power increase by several times?

With this thought, although Lu Tianmeng had regained his calm, his happiness was displayed on his brow. He impatiently waved at the green bag, and it slowly flew back under everyone’s gazes.

The other cultivators naturally knew what such a live demonic beast meant to a member of Spirit Beast Mountain. They couldn’t help but display an expression of envy. However, just as this expression was revealed, that flying bag suddenly stopped in midair and moved no more.

Lu Tianmeng grew frightened and hastily attempted to retrieve his bag by forcefully using more magic power. However, after the bag swayed several more times, it still stopped in midair.

Everyone watching from the side knew something was amiss. They hastily went on guard.

The surface of the leather bag suddenly became bumpy; it seemed that demonic beast was causing these oddities from within the bag. These strange occurrences continued for a short moment before disappearing. But soon after, it suddenly began to swell and with a loud bang as the bag exploded into pieces. The white spider had actually forcibly destroyed the magic tool and restored its original size.

After once again escaping constraint, the demonic beast clearly entered a craze. Its translucent pure white body gradually turned red and began to shoot off fearful blood-red rays of light. It began grinding its mouthful of sharp teeth, releasing fearful crackling noises.

When Lu Tianmeng and the others saw this, they all solemnly drew back several steps, planning to use explosions from magic tools to increase the distance between them.

However, the blood red spider cut forward with its many legs and charged toward the two cultivators furthest away as fast as lightning.

After seeing only two streaks of white light flash by and hearing “Pupu”, the two cultivators’ defensive barriers had been destroyed in a single strike, their bodies severed in two, meeting a violent end. Among these two was unexpectedly that ugly man Zhong Wu. Unfortunately, he had believed he was safer as he was farther away!

After seeing the two cultivators’ deaths along with the spider’s lightning-fast movements, the others that had scattered the

farthest turned pale with fright and feared they would follow the pair's footsteps.

However, they were too late. The demonic beast's body had already flashed and turned into a streak of blood-red light, shooting toward the Saber Transformation Dock cultivator.

This cultivator's face became deathly pale. He grit his teeth, shooting two black throwing knives at the approaching spider.

However, the spider opened its mouth, and shining white liquid shot out toward the throwing knives, causing the throwing knives to lose their magic power and fall to the floor. Then it leaped up with its huge body and bit off the head of the Saber Transformation Dock cultivator. The headless corpse spouted out blood like a fountain, causing those who saw it to become aghast.

The others, Han Li included, no longer hesitated and immediately sent talismans and magic tools to smash its head!

However, even since the spider's body turned blood red, it became as fast as the wind. Within this narrow cavern, the magic tools and magic techniques simply couldn't follow its nimble movements. A short moment later, another two cultivators met their violent end underneath its fierce teeth.

Although one of them had timely used a colored scarf to obstruct its advance, in the blink of an eye, the spider shredded through the scarf and killed him. This spider's legs and fierce teeth were truly sharp! Their hardness was absolutely that of a top-grade magic tool

or higher.

At this moment, only Lu Tianmeng, Xuan Ye, and Han Li had remained! The trio's complexion had become ashen with extreme fear and anger!

If they were in an open area, then these cultivators wouldn't have died so easily. After all, with flying magic tools, they definitely would've lasted longer!

Bang! The spider flashed to the side of Lu Tianmeng. As it attempted to cleave his body in two through his protective barrier, a black object appeared to obstruct it.

This flat and round object appeared to be a small shield, but under careful observation, its surface seemed to have cracks. It was actually a miraculously strange turtle shell. Apart from a shallow mark that remained from the strike, it was completely intact; it was truly astonishing.

Seeing it had no effect, the huge spider immediately gave up on Lu Tianmeng and flashed with red light, arriving at Han Li's side with its jaws open.

However, Han Li's cold expression shook several times. His body suddenly became vague and immediately disappeared. He then appeared over twenty meters away. This caused the demonic beast to unexpectedly stay still from surprise.

During this delay, Xuan Ye took out a small yellow cup and arrived next to the spider. After the small cup flashed with yellow light and expanded, Xuan Ye slapped it underneath, trapping it once again. Afterwards, Han Li expanded his Black Dragon's Grasp to its greatest size and cautiously hovered over the cup, fearing another escape from the demonic beast.

“You two, be at ease. My Heaven Shrouding Cup was refined from copper essence, a material used to refine magic treasures. It absolutely wouldn't be able to escape!” After Xuan Ye's expression relaxed, he explained this to Han Li and Lu Tianmeng.

Hearing this, Han Li's expression relaxed, and he retrieved his Black Dragon's Grasp. It seemed he was truly at ease.

However, Lu Tianmeng walked to the front of the copper cup and took a few looks at it before muttering to himself and shaking his head with worry, saying, “This won't do! I feel unassured! Continue using your cup to trap the beast and give me time to prepare a magic treasure and thoroughly kill this monster.”

When Xuan Ye heard this, he wrinkled his brow, but he didn't say anything and followed along.

Han Li then looked at the transportation formation and the skeleton's command medallion. After a moment of thought, he walked to the side and sat cross-legged in meditation, leaving the previous matter up to the other two.

At this moment, Lu Tianmeng took out a treasure talisman

flashing with azure light. He pressed it between his palms and slowly filled it with spiritual power.

It was obvious that a late Foundation Establishment could use a treasure talisman quickly without having to charge it with power. A short moment later, he separated his hands, and an exquisite small rod shot forth and revolved around his head.

“Are you ready? I’m going to release the demonic beast!” When Xuan Ye saw this, he asked this with concern as he controlled the small cup.

“I’m ready. You both can die at ease. That Greater Displacement Medallion is mine!” Lu Tianmeng widely opened his eyes, suddenly revealing a sinister appearance.

After this large shout, the tip of the short rod released innumerable rays of light. In a flash, one rod became two, two became four and four became eight.... In the blink of an eye, over several hundred similar small rods had appeared. Each of the small rods released a small, buzzing rumble. Then, under Lu Tianmeng’s control, the majority of the rods charged toward Xuan Ye in a dense formation, while a small portion went toward Han Li as he was meditating cross-legged.

When Han Li saw this, his expression slightly changed. He didn’t dare to clench the item in his hand and rigidly stared at the approaching talisman treasures. Xuan Ye’s expression was dull, as if he were turning a blind eye to this crisis.

Seeing the pair's expression, Lu Tianmeng's proud expression froze. As he shouted 'Not Good!' in his mind, he thought to take out the tortoise shell. However, behind him, the sound of the ground rupturing came from behind him. Then, a streak of red light struck at his side.

Suddenly, Lu Tianmeng's body fell to the ground in two pieces. Right after, the red light leaped back a certain distance away and stopped. It was unexpected the blood red spider that had escaped its trap at an unknown time.

Chapter 270: Beheading

Once Lu Tianmeng had died, the magic power supporting the several hundred small rods disappeared. In an instant, they dissolved into specks of azure light and converged together, forming a treasure talisman that gently fell to the floor. At this moment, all that was left was Han Li, Xuan Ye and the blood red spider.

Xuan Ye expressionlessly started at Han Li and didn't make any movements. Han Li then looked at the blood red spider and then looked at Xuan Ye. He then silently raised his hand and brought out his white scale shield. Simultaneously, eight streaks of white light appeared at his side; they were revealed to be Han Li's puppet beasts.

Xuan Ye's expression became slightly moved as he raised his hand to recall the small yellow cup. He insipidly said, "I truly did not think that Junior Martial Han Li was actually an expert in puppet techniques. However, it seems you haven't cultivated it to perfection. Do you think with so few puppets, you could be considered my opponent?"

When Han Li heard this, he expression didn't change. He only coldly asked, "Did you release the spider intentionally?"

"Correct!"

Xuan Ye bluntly acknowledged this. Then he flipped his hand and summoned a red muslin cloak.

“Are you not worried about overreaching yourself and allowing yourself to die to this demonic beast?” Han Li coldly laughed after he licked his dry lips.

“Hehe! Me, die? Against a mere grade four demonic beast with a bit of toughness and brute strength?” Xuan Ye mockingly said. His face was filled with disdain and contempt.

“Regardless, you should go and properly play with that crystal spider! Hope you’ll be able to preserve your life!”

With that said, he covered his body with the muslin cloak. Although he was still there, all the scents from his body completely disappeared.

Han Li was slightly surprised. He couldn’t help but look at that muslin cloak several times.

At this moment, Xuan Ye slowly retreated to a corner of the cavern with a slight smile on his face. It seemed he didn’t want to be involved at all. Han Li’s thoughts whirled in his mind several times and guessed several uses of that muslin cloak. His complexion couldn’t help but change, and he hastily looked at the spider.

After seeing the blood-red spider stare at him with an ominous glint, he heard the sound of crackling come from its fierce teeth. It seemed he had already become its hunting target

After Han Li pondered for a short moment, his body flashed as he rushed toward the corner Xuan Ye was resting.

But when the blood spider saw Han Li move, its blood red light brilliantly shined, and it charged towards Han Li.

However, he had already prepared his puppet beasts, which opened their mouths, taking turns to shoot out light beams at the spider as it drew near. When the beams hit the red spider's body, it tumbled several times back. At this moment, it had no method to further pursue Han Li.

When Xuan Ye saw Han Li approach him at great speed, his heart trembled.

He was greatly fearful toward Han Li's lightning-fast movement technique. How could he let Han Li approach him so near? He reacted by tossing the small cup in his hand towards Han Li. Then radiance shot forth from his body; a set of fire red leather armor appeared on his body. Having lost its usefulness, the muslin cloak had been put away.

When Han Li saw the giant cup barrier approach him, he waved his hand, causing a small mirror to appear in his hand. At the same time, a brilliant azure mist shot forth and immediately turned the huge cup back to its original size, halting it in midair.

"Azure Stasis Mirror!" Xuan Ye shouted in alarm. This was a famous top-grade magic tool from his own sect. How could he not

know of it!

Suddenly, Xuan Ye panicked and moved erratically!

He originally believed this “Heaven Shrouding Cup” would have bought him some time. However, it hadn’t slowed down Han Li’s charge in the slightest. How could he not be in a fluster?

Fortunately, he was still over thirty meters away. Xuan Ye took out an “Ice Storm Technique” talisman and threw it out. It immediately turned into a dense barrage of ice spikes. He assumed that since Han Li would use his white scale shield to defend, he would slow down his movements, giving Xuan Le enough time to take out an impressive magic tool.

When Han Li saw the barrage of ice spikes, a cold light flashed through his eyes, but he inconceivable waved his hand, retrieving the small shield into his storage pouch. At the same time, he suddenly increased his speed. His body became distorted in incomprehensible transformations and charged straight through the icicle barrage without the slightest of injury.

When Xuan Ye saw this, his calm expression thoroughly disappeared, his complexion becoming incomparably pale.

In the blink of an eye, Han Li had already appeared in front of him. Lacking the time to use any magic tools, he could only madly pour the entirety of his spiritual power into his fiery armor and hope the defensive power of this top-grade defensive magic tool was enough to save him from the crisis before his eyes.

Seeing the dazzling radiance released from his opponent's armor, murderous intent rushed forth from Han Li's eyes. He opened his mouth, and a black needle that had been prepared long ago shot out from his mouth when it was least expected, producing an extremely grim hiss as it pierced the air. It flew toward the opponent's armor with extreme speed, creating a world-shakingly loud clap upon impact.

A huge streak of azure sword Qi then appeared from thin air, and with a flash, Han Li was already standing behind Xuan Ye.

Xuan Ye blankly stood at his original location. At the pit of his stomach, a fist-sized hole had appeared on his armor, causing the armor's spiritual Qi to disappear, turning the armor to scrap metal. Then without warning, his head suddenly fell to the floor. After Han Li had suddenly broken his armor, he used an azure essence sword streak to immediately behead him. Naturally, Han Li had already taken his storage pouch as he passed by.

Han Li looked at the storage pouch in his hand and felt an indescribable feeling in his heart!

He was unexpectedly able to kill a late Foundation Establishment cultivator; he had trouble believing he had just done so!

However, Han Li clearly understood that the reason why he was able to kill Xuan Le was because he had caught him off guard and because Xuan Le was restricted by the narrow terrain.

If it were a normal high-level battle between cultivators, Xuan Le absolutely wouldn't have given him the opportunity to approach. Separated by a distance of over a hundred meters and with the assistance of flying magic tools, Xuan Le wouldn't be slower than Han Li's extremely limited movement technique and could move about as he wished.

In order to destroy this person's armor, Han Li had to waste single-use explosive magic tool refined from the fledgling horn of the Inky Flood Dragon. It had been mutually destroyed along with the opponent's armor.

When this fledgling horn was refined, the magic tool shop owner continuously felt regret. If the Inky Flood Dragon had grown another twenty to thirty years, its horn could've been refined into an extremely powerful magic tool and wouldn't need to produce such a fragile consumable magic tool.

But from what happened today, by allowing him to kill a late Foundation Establishment cultivator, this item was truly worthwhile!

After Han Li put away the Azure Stasis Mirror and the small cup, a series of explosions suddenly appeared from behind him. This caused him to stop and instinctively react, patting his storage pouch. Several grade two puppet beasts flew out from his pouch and blocked the blood spider's advance. A few seconds later, the puppets had been cut and gnawed to pieces.

At this moment, the blood spider lowered its head and once again charged towards Han Li!

Han Li raised his hand and sent forth his Black Dragon's Grasp in its greatest size, stopping the huge spider in midair.

Soon after, light beam attacks from his puppet beasts continuously shot at the demonic beast's blood red body. It was eventually suppressed to the point where it was incapable of moving forward.

In a moment of desperation, the blood-red spider sprayed out several spider webs from its mouth. Fortunately, Han Li had already seen the demonic beast use this before, and his body immediately flashed, avoiding it. As for the puppet beasts, although they weren't able to avoid being tangled in the spider's threads in the slightest, Han Li was able to instantly take the tangled ones into his storage pouch and exchange them for fresh puppets. The puppet's attack continued without the slightest of delay.

Han Li immediately thought of using a talisman treasure but couldn't help but dispel the idea against this opponent. After all, using protective barriers and magic tools was unwise and would result in him being trapped by the spider's webs.

With no better choice, Han Li let out a sigh and could only maintain his attacks against the spider. He didn't dare to relax in the slightest.

After a quarter hour, it turned out as Han Li had predicted. The blood red spider's body gradually lost its color, its shell beginning

to show bumps. It was clear that this demonic beast's true essence was almost exhausted, rendering it incapable of using spiritual power to reinforce its body to withstand the attacks.

When Han Li's face revealed a slight smile, the spider seemed to realize the situation was far from good and attempted to flee Han Li's offensive entrapment several times. As it attempted to leap to the cavern's exit, it was swiftly suppressed and pushed back by a burst of the puppets' light beams. In the end, it was actually restrained to one spot by Han Li's ever-changing entrapment.

When the entirety of the demonic beast's true essence had been exhausted, it could only shrink into a ball without any power to counterattack. Han Li then took out the incomparably sharp silver-pointed sword and took several steps forward, beheading the spider. As expected, although the beast's external shell was hard, without any magic power to reinforce its body, its defenses were easily sliced through by the sword.

Han Li finally sat down on the floor, exhausted. He remained silent for half a day.

After a long while, he took a look at the dead cultivators lying in every direction and felt for the first time that the lives of cultivators were fragile. This caused him to feel sorrow in his heart. Would he also meet his end at the hands of another cultivator or end up in the stomach of a demonic beast one day?

After he fully rested, Han Li first gathered the small rod treasure talisman and then searched through the dead cultivators' storage pouches.

Finally, he approached the transportation formation with caution. His gaze continuously flickered between the rainbow skeleton and command medallion.

‘Greater Displacement Medallion! That was what Lu Tianfeng called it!’ Han Li thought as he sunk into contemplation.

Chapter 271: The Greater Displacement Medallion And An Ancient Transportation Formation

“Greater Displacement Medallion” Han Li had never heard of this name before! Seeing that Lu Tianmeng and Xuan Ye had acted to eliminate all others, this object was obviously precious.

However, facing the strange appearance of the rainbow skeleton, Han Li didn't dare to rashly act.

He took out his golden blades and carefully touched the skeleton with it. Seeing that nothing happened, he felt reassured and walked closer, attentively sizing up the command medallion.

The blue luster of the command medallion faintly released twinkling light similar to gems. The medallion was engraved with simple decorative designs and an ancient character. It was clearly an object of ancient origin. As for other areas, Han Li didn't find anything noteworthy. The spiritual power contained within wasn't very large either.

Han Li pondered for a moment and used his golden blade to lightly pick at it, causing the command medallion to easily fall from the hand.

After picking it up with his hand, he noticed that it wasn't made of metal as he had imagined. It was both flexible and hard. It seemed to have been refined from wood.

After Han Li fiddled with it for a moment, he attempted to inject it with a bit of spiritual power.

But then a huge suction force came from the command medallion, taking a great amount of spiritual power away from his body. Fearful, Han Li cut off the spiritual power connection without delay, causing the suction force to disappear.

Having suffered, Han Li didn't dare to recklessly attempt it again and carefully put the command medallion away in his storage pouch.

Then he looked at the several layers of the mysterious transportation formation. He felt very curious regarding where the transportation formation went!

Naturally, Han Li didn't attempt to recklessly use it. Furthermore, even if he truly had such idiotic thoughts, he would be incapable of acting upon them. This was because a corner of the transportation formation had already been damaged. Although the damage was not much, it was sufficient to cause the transportation formation to be inoperable.

Han Li blinked his eyes and suddenly took out a jade slip. He started to record the transportation formation's appearance and decorative design, preparing to ask others about it and see if he could restore the transportation method. He was greatly looking forward to this!

After doing all of this, Han Li looked around the huge cavern to see if there was anything he had missed.

As a result, behind a coarse stone pillar, he had discovered two sparkling translucent eggs, each about the size of a fist.

When Han Li saw this, he was pleasantly surprised. Without guessing, he already knew they were the eggs of the spider demonic beast.

Having personally experienced that spider demonic beast's ferocity, how could Han Li miss this opportunity? He immediately looked for a leather pouch that specialized in holding spiritual beasts from a Spirit Beast Mountain cultivator's storage pouch. Then he carefully put the spider eggs into the bag and then stuffed the bag into his pocket.

With this harvest, Han Li looked around even more attentively, but unfortunately he found nothing else.

However, Han Li didn't mind as he was perfectly content with his spoils.

He returned to the white spider's corpse and dismembered it with no trace of politeness, stuffing the limbs into his storage pouch. Then he took Xuan Ye, Lu Tianmeng and the other cultivators' corpses and used fireballs to turn them into ashes, burying them there.

When Han Li looked at the rainbow skeleton, Han Li threw a few fireballs at it in passing, intending to turn it to ash. But as a result, the skeleton fused with the inferno and condensed into seven to eight small rainbow pearls. This greatly shocked Han Li, and he collected them with curiosity.

Han Li then wanted to leave this place, but in order to make it so the transportation formation wasn't discovered by anyone else, he used azure essence sword streaks to destroy the cavern entrance as he was leaving and completely block the passage. Naturally, he also committed this place to his memory so that he could find it in the future.

After that, Han Li followed the direction of the wind in the stalactite cave, finding an extremely hidden opening. He had finally returned to the surface.

Because Han Li was afraid of Devil Dao cultivators wandering around in the vicinity, he didn't dare to delay and piloted his Divine Wind Boat in the direction of the Tai Yue Mountain Range.

Seven to eight days later, Han Li returned to Yellow Maple Valley. After he went to report about their losses to a steward who was on duty, he remained on standby at his Immortal's cave.

At this moment, he knew the second wave of war had already started. Furthermore, the Seven Sects had received vigorous assistance from two neighboring countries at the very start of the star, and it seemed as if they were currently winning against the six sects. This caused the atmosphere in Yellow Maple Valley to greatly ease up; it was no longer as pessimistic as it was the

beginning of the war.

After returning, Han Li saw that everything inside his Immortal's cave was the same as before. He relaxed, deeply breathing out.

Although it could be said that returning to his sect now wasn't sensible as he was likely to be assigned to fight, any Seven Sects disciple that shrank back as battle approached and used excuses to avoid being conscripted was severely punished; Light punishments took away spirit stones, heavy punishments crippled one's magic power. These things weren't tolerable in the least!

Furthermore, others have told him that Seven Sects had already dealt over a hundred punishments of varying degrees.

Also, regardless if they fled the battlefield, disciples with no assignments or had already completed their assignments were required to report back to the sect within a certain amount of time! If there weren't any reasons for not returning within the timeframe, one would be judged for punishment.

Naturally, consequences for blunt evasion without reporting back or fleeing to another country grew even harsher. They would be chased by a Seven Sect enforcement squads for the rest of their lives until they were killed. So long as the Seven Sects existed, the pursuit would never end.

At this moment, Han Li was unwilling to break away from Yellow Maple Valley and flee the State of Yue; naturally, he openly

returned to obey orders.

In truth, according to his deductions, how could there be a single peaceful haven in the Heavenly South Region if it was suffering from the simultaneous expansion of the Devilish Dao and the Righteous Dao? The cultivation worlds of every region would be in a state of war. It was only a matter of time. As such, he may as well stay in the State of Yue; after all, one's homeland was hard to leave!

The first thing Han Li did when he returned to his Immortal's cave was to soak the spider eggs in the spirit well spring. The Spiritual Qi should slowly incubate and grow them.

Then he quickly secluded himself for two days and finally finished refining the first layer of the Great Development Technique. He didn't know whether it was a coincidence, but the Azure Essence Sword Art simultaneously broke through to the fifth layer after a long period of no progress, much to his surprise. This caused Han Li to enter mid Foundation Establishment.

When Han Li sensed this, he greatly rejoiced. After all, every increase in cultivation would increase the chances of one's survival within this period of chaotic unrest.

But what baffled Han Li was that even after several days, the sect had yet to assign him a mission. This caused Han Li to feel uneasy!

According to his experiences, the rarer the tasks, the more dangerous and troublesome they would be!

But now that Han Li thought better of it, they were currently at war against the six sects, so there were no safe missions! If he nearly lost his life guarding a spirit stone mine, then who knew what would happen on a different assignment!

After these considerations, Han Li's mind became calm once more. Should he take advantage of this short break to start investigating this "Greater Displacement Medallion"?"

As for his master Li Huayuan and Hong Bi, he didn't need to explain the matter of Dong Xuan'er to them. As Core Formation cultivators, they had long since left the sect on missions.

In the Heaven's Knowledge Pavilion within Yellow Maple Valley, Han Li spent two days of frantic searching, eventually finding a simple introduction of the "Greater Displacement Medallion" in a book called 《Knowledge of Cave Mysteries》.

According to the book, this lustrous blue command medallion was actually used by ancient cultivators to transport themselves across extremely long distances. One must have this magic tool or else the journey's safety couldn't be guaranteed.

By only possessing a similar "Shifting Movements Medallion", a cultivator wouldn't die from the pressure of being transported through a long distance of space. As for short distance teleportation, the pressure could be disregarded. For example, with the small transportation formation at Yue Lu Hall, Han Li hadn't felt the slightest bit of discomfort.

As for how the Shifting Movements Medallion guaranteed the safety of long-distance transportation, the book didn't explain. Furthermore, the method to create the Shifting Movements Medallion had long been lost during the turmoil of the ancient cultivation world. Existing "Greater Displacement Medallion" had also disappeared one by one without a trace. In current times, it had already become an item of lore, an item that nobody was heard to possess.

However, in the current cultivation world, this may not be the case!

Because ancient transportation formations had become an object of legend earlier than the Greater Displacement Medallion, a single such formation could not be found in the Heavenly South Region, though this could not be said for other places. It was slightly possible one could be found in a desolate area or a sect's hidden grounds.

But in the current cultivation world, the farthest a transportation formation could travel was about fifty kilometers. As for ancient transportation formations, they could travel for over several millions of kilometers. They fundamentally couldn't be compared. Even as such, a sect or clan could only afford the construction of three or four transportation formations. Any more would be far too much of an expense.

Now that Han Li clearly understood the usage of the Greater Displacement Medallion, the first thought that came to mind was 'Could it be that the underground transportation formation was an

ancient transportation formation?’

This guess caused Han Li’s heart to wildly thump! He knew the odds of this were high.

If this were true, with this Greater Disposition Medallion and with a repaired transportation formation, he could immediately travel to a place at least five million kilometers away. He wouldn’t need to get further tangled in this mess between the Seven Sects of the State of Yue and the Six Sects of the Devilish Dao. He could travel to a new place and continue his cultivation there.

With this thought, Han Li found he was unable to restrain himself.

He started to look for books regarding ancient transportation formation to see whether or not there was a method to restore that underground transportation formation.

Han Li spent many days searching through the libraries of the Heaven’s Knowledge Pavilion. However, he hadn’t found a single formation spell book with regards to ancient transportation formations.

This caused Han Li to become greatly disappointed!

At this moment, Han Li thought of a single person who could perhaps help him restore this formation.

Chapter 272: One Year

The person Han Li thought of was naturally Qi Yunxiao, whom he had made a pact with several years ago.

Since Qi Yunxiao, a friend and formation spell master, was proficient in the “Five Elements Reversal Formation”, surely he should be very knowledgeable about other formations. This ancient transportation formation could also be considered a formation spell. As such, perhaps this friend of his could help him restore the formation.

As Han Li thought of this, his heart felt greatly moved. After thinking about the dates, he realized that the day the two had arranged to meet again shouldn't be far away. However, he could be dispatched on a mission at any time, so he wouldn't be able to immediately leave to go find him. It seemed he had no choice but to postpone the trip.

After a moment of contemplation, Han Li felt slightly disheartened and was no longer in the mood to further look through formation spell books, returning to his Immortal's cave.

Returning to his Immortal's cave, Han Li discovered that the spider eggs had grown larger. It seemed the spirit well spring was quite effective at accelerating their incubation.

When Han Li saw this, he immediately drew a simple spirit-controlling spell formation, a cultivator's basic method for controlling infant demonic beasts. He then bled several drops of

essence blood into the spell formation and placed the spider eggs within. The spell formation took effect, and the two white eggs absorbed the essence blood. Han Li then placed them back into spirit spring.

As Han Li finished this, a sound transmission talisman arrived and told him to go the main hall without delay.

His heart trembled. He knew his assignment has finally come.

.....

On the main battlefield between the Seven Sects of the State of Yue and the Six Sets of the Devilish Dao, at a patch of stones in the Golden Drum Plains at the common border between the States of Yue and Che Ji, Han Li was controlling two streaks of light formed from his Black Dragon's Grasp and several golden blades. He was madly attacking an early Foundation Establishment disciple from the Ghost Spirit Sect at all sides.

Although the black Qi on his opponent's body surged formidably and had several human skulls faintly howling around him, under the violent storm of attacks from Han Li's two magic tools, Han Li quickly found an opening and chopped him into pieces.

Han Li skillfully snatched the other's storage pouch from his body. Yet another person had disappeared from this boundless wasteland.

By the time he reaped his harvest, the sky had already turned dark. As usual, the Core Formation cultivators of the Devil Dao and the Seven Sects should have come out to fight.

If the battle spread to his location, he was certain to die an unjust death!

Han Li recalled a battle between Core Formation cultivators that he had previously witnessed with his own eyes; Fear still lingered in his heart!

The magic battle between the cultivators of Saber Transformation Dock and the Controlling Spirit Sect had shattered the heavens and earth and swept back and forth over several kilometers.

From then on, so long as the sky was the slightest bit dark, he made an early return even if he turned up empty-handed.

A year before, he and several others had received orders to escort a spirit stone transport to this location. Afterwards, they would remain there and become high-grade cannon fodder for the Seven Sects, participating in multiple successive large-scale battles. The battle that had just occurred deep within the Golden Drum Plains was such a battle, where over a thousand scattered enemies mutually killing one another was a common occurrence.

What was even more baffling was that ever since the second campaign between the Devil Dao and the Seven Sects had resulted in a draw, the two sides facing each other across the vast Golden

Drum Plains would engage in a large skirmish every month, as well as random battles, both small and large, occurring everyday.

The so-called 'large skirmishes' involved both sides dispatching over a thousand troops in a mutual struggle. For small melees, each side would dispatch small groups of cultivators spanning from groups of three to five or even solitary cultivators to the center of the Golden Drum Plains, all of whom sought to kill enemy cultivators.

Large skirmishes didn't go as one would expect. Although both sides had fought fervently enough, the number of casualties were quite small. If a side truly tried their utmost, the other side would activate their core defensive barrier, so it would become extremely difficult to harm them.

For other smaller skirmishes, because the strength of Core Formation and Foundation Establishment cultivators were incomparable, they tacitly agreed to reserve the time between morning and early evening for close skirmishes between Foundation Establishment cultivators after each side had probed one another out. When night arrived, Core Formation Experts would appear, and a great battle would occur.

Core Formation cultivators fought alone, one on one, even if they were likely to be defeated or sustain heavy injury. But if their lives were in danger, the speed at which a Core Formation cultivator could flee with all their strength was truly astonishing!

A year passed in this manner. Each side had suffered several hundred losses of Foundation Establishment cultivators. As for

Core Formation cultivators, their losses also were not few. This caused the leaders of both sides to feel great heartache at their losses and a bit of depression.

As for Qi Condensation cultivators, because their magic power was meager, they could only prepare their strength and had preserved the entirety of their numbers.

However, with this passing year of war on the battlefield, sabotage and raids had not ceased, causing both the the Devil Dao and the Seven Sects to feel they could not endure much longer! Both sides simultaneously attempted to weaken the other and accumulate their own strength. They both clearly understood that the moment of their decisive battle was soon drawing near.

After two hours on the Divine Wind Boat, Han Li arrived at his allied camp.

Wood and stone rooms of various sizes could be faintly seen from within the great restrictive formation, scattered about without any semblance of a pattern. These were improvised buildings created by cultivators with wood and earth attribute Daoist magics. Naturally, the camp was divided into regions accordance their sects.

Han Li first went to his dwelling, a stone room that wasn't very large.

After he firmly closed the door, he temporarily sealed the room with essence restriction formation flags.

Then, Han Li took out the items from the storage pouch he obtained today and laid them out before starting to pick through them.

“Again with heaps of human skulls and small flags! Apart from the Ghost Spirit Sect, who else would have such use for these ghostly items? Yi! This sword isn’t bad. I’ll keep it as a spare. This...” After Han Li muttered to himself as he quickly separated the magic tools that would be of use and would remain. Those that were of little value and could not be used would go into a separate storage pouch.

After Han Li put everything into the storage pouches, Han Li removed the formation and walked out.

He turned several corners and eventually walked toward a very conspicuous room.

This wooden room spanned a length of hundred fifty meters and was painted with golden paint all over. When the sun setted, it glimmered as if it were truly made from gold.

Han Li impolitely pushed the door and entered. The room was bustling with activity and had several tens of trading stalls set up by cultivators. There were even more cultivators who were currently haggling over the price or picking items from the trading stalls.

With great familiarity, Han Li hastily rushed through several

stalls and turned the items in his storage pouch into spirit stone with great speed. After all the items had disappeared, he had about a hundred more spirit stones.

Han Li didn't pay any further attention to anything else and went to the center of the room toward the largest vendor stall.

This vendor's stall spanned over twenty meters, nearly three to four times bigger than that the other vendor stalls. The stall's owner was a chubby mid Foundation Establishment cultivator.

Han Li didn't say any superfluous words and immediately threw a storage pouch full of spirit stones toward the fatty, impolitely saying, "Elder Brother Chen, I have gathered five hundred spirit stones for the Dragon Cry Grass."

"Hehe, well if it isn't Brother Han! Truly impressive, you managed to gather this many spirit stones so quickly!" When the fatty saw Han Li, he immediately beamed with a smile. Then he sunk his consciousness into the storage pouch within his chubby hands to count the spirit stones.

"Not bad, not bad! It really is five hundred spirit stones! Here is the Dragon Cry Grass. Make sure to put it away properly!" Fatty Chen then took out a jade box with a joyful smile and handed it over to Han Li.

Han Li took the small box and immediately opened it to see what was inside. He then nodded his head and put it away. Afterwards, he asked the fatty with slight anticipation, "With regards to my

previous requests for pill formulas, is there any news? So long as there's a pill formula, I am willing to pay a bit more!"

"Old pal, pill formulas are extremely rare. Although Foundation Establishment cultivators are likely to have some, they are extremely treasured items. Who would dare to take them out and sell them? Furthermore, if dear friend wishes to have pill formula that are of use to Foundation Establishment cultivators, it would be even more difficult. I've spared no effort, but even so, I truly haven't been able to find any!" When Fatty Chen heard Han Li's words, he face grew bitter as he poured out his complaints.

Feeling slight disappointment, Han Li wore an indifferent smile and said, "It doesn't matter. If there's nothing, then forget it! I still must thank Elder Brother Chen for helping find those two formulas earlier!"

When Fatty Chen heard those words, he happily smiled, saying, "Those two nearly ruined pill formulas were something I picked up over my many years. I didn't dare to be confident that you would actually want them! However, dear friend wished to take them and experiment to see whether he could improve them. This is something ordinary people wouldn't dare to do. After all, the energy and time required to do so is far too great! It's a feat that perhaps would be accomplished with the constant efforts of multiple generations!"

The fatty said this while feeling slightly moved.

When Han Li heard this, he faintly smiled and didn't say anything else.

Ever since Han Li arrived here, he shockingly discovered that within the camp's improvised market, there were many rare goods that couldn't be found in market cities. From medicinal herbs and raw materials to magic tools and cultivation techniques, it nearly had them all.

All the medicinal ingredients he lacked for the Spirit Gathering Pill were easily gathered within the market. With only a bit of maturation, he'd be able to immediately progress his magic power once more.

With this fatty here, Han Li only had to spend about a thousand spirit stones for two of his greatly desired pill formulas, much to his pleasant surprise!

Chapter 273: A Timely Encounter

After pulling out a majority of the spirit stones in his pocket, Han Li even collected a majority of the ingredients necessary for the new ancient pill formulas.

As for the remaining missing ingredients, Han Li gritted his teeth and risked taking out two four-hundred-year-old spirit herbs to sell. His other option was to participate in a few more assignments to kill Devil Dao cultivators. In this way, not only could he earn a reward of a considerable amount of spirit stones, he could also exchange the items found in the enemies' storage pouches for even more spirit stones.

Based on the numerous treasure talismans he possessed and the strength of the Great Development Technique, even if Han Li ran into late Foundation Establishment cultivator, he could escape from the opponent safe and sound. Similarly, if early or mid Foundation Establishment cultivators were to run into Han Li, they naturally would not have any strength to retaliate and would lose their life under Han Li's hand.

Of course, how could important Foundation Establishment cultivators like the Ghost Spirit Sect's young master participate in these kinds of operations?

Just like this, Han Li earned himself a small bit of reputation among the Seven Sects Foundation Establishment cultivators this past year.

Everyone knew that a vicious character had emerged from the Yellow Maple Valley. While his cultivation base was only that of the mid Foundation Establishment, he inconceivably hunted down ten or so Devil Dao cultivators and was still able to return whole.

Han Li used the spirit stones that he had exchanged for to gather all the remaining ingredients for the ancient pill formulas. Upon hearing that the campgrounds of a few other sects also had similar exchange locations, Han Li asked Fatty Chen to be on the lookout for pill formulas, but now it seemed there wasn't much hope.

Just as Han Li wanted to say goodbye to the other person, a gust of fragrant wind suddenly reached his nose.

Slightly stunned, Han Li twisted his head around to take a look; an elegant and cold female cultivator was approaching from behind.

Upon clearly seeing that newcomer's touching face and that dainty body with full assets, Han Li's expression did not change, but in his heart, he was somewhat uneasy! It was actually Junior Martial Sister Chen, with whom he had had skin-to-skin contact before. As soon as he thought about the provocative and erotic scene from that night, a strange feeling surged up in his heart.

Come to think of it, he and this woman had not run into each other ever since the departure from the forbidden area, so he didn't know when she had arrived at this camp.

“Fifth Uncle, this is the item that you asked for!”

Junior Martial Sister Chen indifferently sized up Han Li. Soon after, a trace of shock flashed across her eyes, but she still arrived in front of Fatty Chen and handed a storage pouch over to him.

“Hehe! Niece Qiaoqian, your arrival is too timely; I was just thinking about these goods!” Fatty Chen said with delight upon seeing Junior Martial Sister Chen, his jowls flapping.

“Fifth Uncle?”

Han Li was stunned by Fatty Chen’s title for quite some time!

He never expected that this fatty whom he had known for the greater half of a year was actually Junior Martial Sister Chen’s senior. Just based on his mid Foundation Establishment cultivation base, his status in the Chen Clan would definitely not be low.

After initially glancing at Han Li, Junior Martial Sister Chen did not send a single glance in Han Li’s way. This cold treatment caused Han Li to feel unhappy in his heart!

“Senior Martial Brother Chen, I will take my leave now, but I will definitely come visit you in the future!” Han Li said politely, unwilling to stay any longer. He turned his head around and walked out of the market.

At this time, Chen Qiaoqian finally gazed coldly at Han Li’s

disappearing figure; her eyebrows were tightly knit as she asked Fatty Chen, who was inspecting the storage pouch:

“Fifth Uncle, was this scaredy-cat trying to buy something from you?”

“Scaredy-cat?”

Fatty Chen was shocked by Chen Qiaoqing’s words.

“Yes, the fellow who was just standing here!”

“You’re talking about..... Han Li?” Fatty Chen blinked his tiny eyes as an expression of disbelief surfaced on his face.

“Yes, I’m talking about him. Is there something wrong with that?” Chen Qiaoqian asked, somewhat curious.

Back then, during the expedition to the forbidden area, Han Li had not given this Junior Martial Sister Chen any good impressions. She always reckoned that Han Li was someone who had run into a great deal of good fortune and always took the opportunity to escape from a fight.

Fatty Chen sat in silence for a moment before suddenly sighing, saying with a strange tone:

“Qiaoqian, you’ve just arrived here and are ignorant about some

matters. Although I don't know why you think this guy is a scaredy-cat, your fellow sect member's reputation here is not small! He is an extremely strong character who exterminated ten or so Foundation Establishment cultivators in succession and is definitely not a mediocre individual. I even want to recommend this person to the clan leader after a few more battles. If we can win over this guy, he will be a great help to us!"

"He exterminated ten or so Foundation Establishment cultivators?" Junior Martial Sister Chen asked, the cold expression on her face turning into one of amazement; she truly did not dare to believe what she was hearing.

She couldn't help but gaze blankly at the exchange location's front door, but by now, Han Li had already left the room for quite some time.

After walking out of the exchange location, Han Li pondered for a moment, then headed towards his master Li Huayuan's residence, preparing to pay his respects to his master according to common convention.

As a Core Formation cultivator, Li Huayuan's residence could not be compared to those of regular cultivators! He lived in a cozy little house in the middle of a large formation; his wife naturally lived together with him.

As for Han Li's seven Senior Martial Brothers, apart from the eldest, who was still standing guard outside of the Green Ripple Cave, all the others had missions and were not present here. The only ones remaining here were Han Li and his Fourth Senior

Martial Brother, Song Meng.

The first day that Han Li arrived and went to see Li Huayuan, his cultivation base of mid Foundation Establishment caused his master to feel great shock!

After all, Han Li had only successfully entered Foundation Establishment a few years ago.

Under normal circumstances, even cultivators with good talent would need to spend ten or more years before advancing from early to mid Foundation Establishment, so Han Li's sudden advancement in leaps and bounds naturally aroused Li Huayuan's curiosity.

After finding no evidence from searching Han Li's body, he asked some questions related to the cause for Han Li's cultivation base to grow so quickly.

Han Li naturally would not reveal the truth; instead, he put on an act of confusion, as if he also didn't know what had happened, causing Li Huayuan to feel depressed for quite a while before dropping the matter altogether! After all, he was currently confronting grave difficulties. He was not in the mood to spend too much time investigating this matter.

As for the matters of the Yan Clan defecting and Dong Xuan'er falling into enemy hands, Li Huayuan and Hong Fu both already knew about it. Apart from being extremely enraged by this, they did not actually blame Han Li too much.

After all, the opponent's strength was too great; for Han Li to be able to escape with his life was already not an easy feat.

Just as Han Li was thinking these things, he had already arrived outside of Li Huayuan's residence!

What shocked him was that his Fourth Senior Martial Brother Song Meng was actually standing outside the room with his arms hugging his shoulders, strangely full of energy as if he were a posted sentry standing guard.

Upon seeing Han Li, Song Meng's face revealed a trace of laughter. He said in a deep voice:

“Junior Martial Brother Han, you've come to pay your respects to Master once again!”

Han Li gently laughed and gave an “en”.

After Han Li had become somewhat famous, Song Meng forced Han Li to spar with him privately. Although Han Li had relied on a magic tool to penetrate his defenses and claim a small victory, he slowly began to feel friendlier towards Han Li, and between the two of them, they actually began to laugh and talk with one another.

“Junior Martial Brother Han, Master is currently discussing with some guests, so you should wait outside for now! Come to think of

it, I've made some progress in my cultivation technique; why don't you spar with me in a bit!" Song Meng smiled as he explained to Han Li, but immediately after he made an invitation that caused Han Li's head to hurt greatly.

Ever since Senior Martial Brother Song had lost to him, every so often he would ask that Han Li spar with him one more time. However, how could Han Li be willing to reveal his true strength? Naturally, he firmly refused every time.

If this were the Yellow Maple Valley, this Senior Martial Brother Song wouldn't be so easy to shake off! Luckily, many strong cultivators were in this campground, and many opponents as well. Song Meng, seeing that he did not succeed after pestering Han Li a few times, was unable to bear his own temperament and went to go find other people.

Only then could Han Li finally let out a sigh of relief!

Thus, upon hearing Song Meng's last sentence, Han Li bitterly laughed once; no matter what, he did not dare to easily agree to what was being discussed!

However, Han Li was very interested in Li Huayuan and the group of guests with him.

After all, for Song Meng to use such respectful words meant that the people in the room most likely were Core Formation cultivators. But just when he wanted to gather some information from Song Meng, the tightly-shut door suddenly opened, and a few

male and female cultivators walked out from inside.

Li Huayuan and his wife followed closely behind, clasping their hands and sending them out.

As expected, they were all Core Formation cultivators! Han Li clearly saw that of the four men and three women, their cultivation bases were unfathomably deep!

He and Song Meng did not dare to block the road and hurriedly split, one left, one right, helplessly standing to the side!

Li Huayuan instantly saw Han Li, but he only gave a light smile before paying no further attention to him. The other cultivators naturally also glanced at Han Li, but most of them ignored him after that. After all, a mid Foundation Establishment cultivator was truly nothing worth taking note of.

However, a slender and perfectly figured female cultivator with a veil over her face suddenly stopped after her gaze swept over Han Li, her figure shaking. At the same time, a strange, difficult-to-discern light flashed across a pair of bright eyes.

“Has Fairy Nangong met this lowly disciple before?”

Upon noticing this female cultivator’s strange behavior, the other cultivators couldn’t help but glance at this woman somewhat strangely; even more, Li Huayuan opened his mouth to ask this, feeling even more shocked.

As soon as the words “Fairy Nangong” reached Han Li’s ears, Han Li’s heart jumped. All kinds of tastes surfaced in his heart as if he had just knocked over a food dish.

Although he forcefully maintained his expression, he still couldn’t help but glance at this female cultivator.

Chapter 274: Appointment

“No! It’s just that he looks very similar to an old friend that I haven’t seen in a long time.” The strange expression in Fairy Nangong’s eyes disappeared, and she recovered her clear, cold gaze.

This sentence caused Han Li’s heart to feel a tart, slightly bitter taste.

“Oh, then this is really coincidental!” Li Huayuan gently laughed and said, sizing up Han Li once again. However, Han Li’s face was as calm as water, not revealing even the slightest odd reaction.

The other cultivators glanced at each other once; although they all revealed knowing expressions, only the heavens knew how much they truly believed!

This Fairy Nangong also knew that these words were unlikely to obtain the trust of the others; however, she still offered no defense and floated away. The remaining people all gazed at Han Li with deep meaning before saying their goodbyes to Li Huayuan and his wife.

The smile on Li Huayuan’s face slowly disappeared after sending off all the guests. He knitted his eyebrows, then turned around and said to Han Li indifferently:

“Follow me into the room, I have some things to ask you!”

Seeing this, Han Li bitterly complained to himself, but he could only agree. As for his master's young wife, she gently assured Han Li with a few sentences, then followed him into the room.

When Han Li walked into the guest lobby, Li Huayuan was sitting on the chair, appearing very thoughtful.

“You and Nangong Wan of the Masked Moon Sect know each other?” Li Huayuan, upon seeing that Han Li was in front of him, stopped his contemplation and directly asked Han Li this without beating around the bush at all.

Han Li was silent for a while upon hearing this, weighing his options in his heart many times. He knew that Nangong Wan's strange behavior had definitely been noticed by his master and that he would have no way of making something up to get by; thus he could only nod his head in acknowledgement:

“This disciple truly had a fateful encounter with this Martial Aunt Nangong once!”

Upon hearing Han Li confess this so easily, Li Huayuan actually felt that it was somewhat strange, and the expression on his face immediately became warmer.

“Can you tell me what exactly happened?” The young woman's curiosity was greatly aroused upon hearing these words from Han Li, and she couldn't help but ask this question. Just then, Nangong Wan had directly denied that she and Han Li knew each other, yet

now this disciple suddenly said that they did know each other; there definitely would be some interesting stories involved.

When Li Huayuan heard his wife ask this, he also nodded his head and gazed at Han Li; it seemed that he also wanted to know the whole story.

“Master, please forgive me. Because this matter involves some of Martial Aunt Nangong’s personal matters, this disciple once promised her that I would absolutely not leak this matter; please forgive me, Master and Master’s Wife!” Han Li tactfully refused, having long prepared a completely fair excuse.

Hearing these words, Li Huayuan and his wife were incredibly astonished; after glancing at each other, Li Huayuan thought first before slowly speaking, as if he were deliberating over something.

“Since you made an agreement with her, I naturally cannot force you to break that promise. However, Master would like to remind you that it’s best to limit contact with this Fairy Nangong! One should know that the charming techniques of the Masked Moon Sect are quite impressive, and I’m worried that you will fall under her Dao without even realizing it or are even blatantly ignoring it. But since you appear to be clear-minded and are clear with your words, I am somewhat more assured.”

Han Li’s heart relaxed upon hearing this. He repeatedly said “yes” in agreement.

The last shreds of unease in Li Huayuan’s heart disappeared upon

seeing Han Li's respectful expression and attitude. He even happily gave Han Li some pointers and answered his questions on cultivation; Han Li naturally listened extremely attentively, not willing to let a single one of Li Huayuan's sentences slip by.

After asking some questions about Han Li's experiences while cultivating for a long while and being quite satisfied with Han Li's responses, Li Huayuan suddenly said something extremely surprising.

“Han Li, right now I have a personal matter that I would like you to take care of. Are you willing take up the task?”

“Personal matter?”

Han Li was surprised in his heart, but he immediately answered without reserve:

“If Master has something on his mind, you can just tell me. This disciple will naturally do his best to complete it!”

Li Huayuan was very pleased with Han Li's lack of hesitation and stood up, pacing a few steps before saying in a deep voice:

“In reality, it isn't something that's too dangerous! I just want to ask you to temporarily act as a bodyguard, ensuring the safety of a family member!”

“Bodyguard, protect someone?” Han Li felt somewhat stunned,

but he still silently awaited Li Huayuan's next words.

“We originally wanted your Fourth Senior Martial Brother Song Meng to go at first, but recently I heard that you killed many Devil Dao cultivators, which greatly shocked both me and my wife! I never expected that such a fierce individual could emerge from under my tutelage; I also heard that even people from the other six sects often talk about you! Because of this, I would feel more at peace if you were the one to go!” Li Huayuan gently laughed; one could see that at this moment, his mood was very good.

At the same time, the young woman to the side similarly said, smiling:

“In addition, Song Meng has stayed in the Green Ripple Cave ever since he was young and hasn't gained much outside experience. His worldly experience is greatly lacking, This alone is one reason why you must be the one to go! After all, the person you must protect is a mortal from the secular world.”

Upon hearing the words of praise from Li Huayuan and his wife, Han Li wore an extremely shy expression and laughed, slightly embarrassed. However, with regards to them wanting him to protect some commoners, although Han Li's expression appeared normal, in his heart he was still somewhat depressed.

What kind of dangers would an ordinary commoner encounter? Randomly sending a Qi Condensation disciple was more than enough to act as a bodyguard; why would they want him, a Foundation Establishment cultivator, to go?

Perhaps Li Huayuan guessed Han Li's misgivings, because he gave both an explanation and a narration:

“The person I want you to protect is a descendant of my Senior Martial Brother, who once saved my life. However, his only son was a mortal with no spiritual roots; with no way to cultivate, he can only stay in the secular world. Thus, before he died I promised that as long as I lived for one more day, I would definitely ensure the safety and prosperity of his descendants! I've secretly supported this family for the past hundred or so years by providing many riches and completely eliminating any dangers.”

Li Huayuan stopped speaking, as if he were thinking on past matters. But afterwards, he collected his expression and said:

“However, I received notice in the past few days that the Six Devil Dao Sects may send out a few low-level disciples and mix them into this state's secular world and then clean up some of the people that our Seven Sects are secretly supporting. They want to damage the supply of basic materials that the secular world supplies to our Seven Sects. Because of my relationship with this family, they will most likely also be taken out by the Devil Dao's cultivators. Thus, I must have a representative who can go forwards to preserve the safety of this family when the storm hits. Of course, if the Devil Dao cultivators don't go looking to start trouble with them, all the better.”

After hearing this, Han Li respectfully nodded his head, indicating that he understood.

“Okay, I will write a letter to the current clan leader to tell them your identity and situation; he is also the only person who knows about the matter between me and the previous Martial Ancestor. I have also already told others that during this period of time, your trip will count as a mission. This way you don’t have to worry about being punished. In addition, this jade slip contains detailed information on the entire clan. Bring it with you when go back to your lodgings and pack your bags. You will depart tomorrow morning, lest the situation suddenly change if you wait!” Li Huayuan ordered after thinking for some time.

“As you command!” Han Li bowed, then gently answered.

.....

Han Li sat on the Divine Wind Boat, flying tens of feet above the ground at full speed.

His current destination was not the location of the clan that he was supposed to protect in the capital of the State of Yue—Yuejing; rather, he was flying directly towards the State of Yuan Wu.

Taking advantage of the somewhat increased freedom of this mission, Han Li was hurrying to make the meeting that he and Qi Yunxiao had set. In addition, he wanted to see if that formation master was able to repair the damaged ancient teleportation formation.

If the Seven Sects were to face a great defeat in a battle, this would be his last resort for escaping. Otherwise, if the Six Devil

Dao Sects were to have their hands suddenly freed, he could only do his best to survive under their suppression and encirclement; how could he have any time to continue his cultivation in that situation?

Han Li estimated that if no accidents occurred on this trip, a short duration of twenty days would be more than enough to take care of his business without delaying the mission Li Huayuan had given him. Thus, he could continue to move forward assuredly.

Qi Yunxiao and Han Li's meeting location was in a certain teahouse in a small city in the State of Yuan Wu.

Based on what Qi Yunxiao said, the teahouse was opened by one of his subordinates; so once Han Li found that location, he could easily contact Qi Yunxiao.

Han Li moved as fast as lightning the entire way; even if he occasionally encountered a few other cultivators, he would just brush past them without paying them any additional attention. He had no intentions of chatting with them. After flying nonstop for seven or eight days, Han Li finally arrived at the small "Golden Horse City".

In order to not create a commotion, Han Li landed and put away his magic tools a few kilometers away from the city. Then, he walked slowly towards the city gate.

Although this Gold Horse City was not large, the outside of the city door was bustling with people coming and going, seemingly

very busy.

Han Li's appearance was plain, and the robes he wore had long since been exchanged for a worn-down Confucian robe. When squeezed in the midst of all the people entering the city, he did not draw attention whatsoever; in this way, he followed the flow of the people into the city.

This teahouse's reputation was not small; Han Li randomly found a child to inquire about the location of the "Clear Spring Teahouse" and actually easily got the answers he was looking for. He then walked towards the place.

Naturally, when Han Li was standing in front of this "Clear Spring Teahouse", he began to assess it with great interest.

Chapter 275: Fragrant Tea

This teahouse wasn't large. It was only a single story building with three rooms. Before having even entered, Han Li could already smell the fragrant scent of tea!

Han Li was somewhat surprised. Although Han Li didn't not understand much about the intricacies of tea, he felt a slight trace of Spiritual Qi from the tea fragrance.

His heart stirred, and he did not hesitate to enter any further.

The three rooms were arranged side to side with one large room and two small. At this moment, it was filled with groups of three to four tea guests. The tea shop didn't have any empty seats, so seven to eight differently dressed patrons peacefully waited at the side.

Even though the tea shop had many guests inside, there wasn't a single person making a ruckus.

The majority of them softly closed their eyes and sipped the fragrant tea before them. There were only a few people who were whispering.

On the wall of the largest room at the center, a several-meter-long yellow paper banner hung from the top of the wall. On it was written, "Every guest is limited to one pot per day" in large and bold calligraphy; it was quite eye-catching.

When Han Li saw this, he found it funny. This was the first time he heard of those making a living from selling food or drink limiting the quantities that others could eat or drink.

However, he only laughed away and didn't take the trouble to think of it further. Instead, he swept his gaze across the room and immediately spotted a person appearing to be the shopkeeper pacing back and forth in a corner.

This should be the tea shop's shopkeep. He appeared to be over forty years old and had short facial hair, giving him an exceptionally shrewd appearance.

At this moment he was standing at the front counter, using an abacus with a lowered head. From time to time, he turned his head to look at his ledger.

Han Li walked several steps over and stood in front of the desk, remaining calm and silent. This caused the shopkeep to look up with a bit of surprise.

Once he clearly saw Han Li, his expression immediately changed. He hastily put his abacus and ledger to the side and left the front counter.

With slight reverence, he respectfully asked, "Is there any matter this Junior may help Senior with? This one will spare no effort!"

This shopkeep was unexpectedly a cultivator in addition to a

shopkeep, but his cultivation was pathetically low. He was only at the fourth layer of Qi Condensation.

Now that he was facing a senior with unfathomably deep cultivation, his heart was naturally restless.

Han Li didn't say anything further, He lightly wiped against the desk counter with his sleeve pocket, leaving behind a sparkling azure jade pendant on the counter.

When the shopkeep saw this jade pendant, he stared blankly at it. But soon after, he said with an expression of pleasant surprise, "So it turned out to be Senior Han. This Junior is lacking in manners! Young Master Qi has already told me that Senior would arrive in the near future. This Junior has been waiting for you for quite a long time!"

When Han Li heard this, he put away his jade pendant and peacefully said, "I wish to now see your clan's young master. Please show me the way!"

"I will follow your orders, Senior!"

He first called over two of the store's waiters, and after telling them a few words, he brought Han Li to the back door and left the town, heading west. "Gold Horse Town" had a large expanse of yellow green hills on its west side. They were countless and varied of all sizes. The shopkeep brought Han Li through the hills with much familiarity and made several turns. They then arrived at a sunken depression that spanned over fifteen acres.

At the center of the depression were seven to eight white stone rooms. To the east and west of the rooms, there were several batches of thinly spread azure bamboo.

After the shopkeep brought Han Li to this location, he bowed to Han Li and said, "Senior, the young master is within the rooms. However, the rooms are surrounded by a few formation spells. Normally I would report to the young master before bringing an outsider in, but since the young master has already told me about Senior Han, if Senior closely follows behind me, you can enter. Otherwise, you will activate the formation spells

Han Li thoughtfully look around the depression and the disorderly azure bamboo, indifferently saying, "I understand. Don't hesitate to lead the way."

When shopkeep's heard Han Li, he let out a deep breath and carefully brought Han Li to the rooms.

His path forward was quite peculiar. In one moment he would walk forward three steps, then walk back two steps, then walk five steps, then turn around and step six steps that way. It was quite chaotic, it was as if there was no pattern that could be discerned.

As such, the two slowly approached the rooms at the center of the depression.

"Young Master, Senior Han has arrived. Please come out and see for yourself!" When they were about thirty meters away from the

room, the shopkeep let out a breath and loudly yelled toward the largest room.

“Senior Han has come? That is great! However, please wait a moment! I will be right out.” Qi Yunxiao’s pleasantly surprised voice came from within the room, but soon after, a smothered “Bang” could be heard, followed by Qi Yunxiao’s bitter cursing.

“Sigh, another failure!”

When the stone door opened, Qi Yunxiao walked out with an appearance of disappointment. He carried the scent of a blazing fire on his body.

However, after he saw Han Li, his face suddenly became bright and excitedly approached, saying, “It really is Senior! This is truly great! Please follow me, let Junior show your hospitality as a host. This place has some top quality tea. Let’s have a few cups.”

Qi Yunxiao cordially invited Han Li into a room. His movements had become much more experienced since Han Li had last seen him several years ago.

“Then I must thank you!” Han Li knew that he still had to request his help and was very polite.

After that, he entered the room and sat near a long table that was three meters long.

“Senior, that...” Once Qi Yunxiao commanded the shopkeep to make a pot of tea, he turned his hand and seemed to hesitate, wanting to ask Han Li something.

With a silent smile, Han Li took out the book 《Yunxiao Experience》and placed it on the table. The book’s flickering silver light had remained, showing that the seal was still intact.

When Qi Yunxiao saw this book, his spirit shook. But when he thought to reach out and take it, he suddenly thought of something and promptly said, “Senior, please wait a moment.” He hastily walked out.

Han Li faintly smiled, as if he had guessed his intentions.

Not long after, Qi Yunxiao animatedly returned to the room with a small wooden box about a foot long.

“Senior, this is a set of formation establishment magic tools for the improved Five Elements Reversal Formation. Although its strength isn’t as high as the spell formation’s original might like I predicted, the improved formation is still more powerful than the formation I gave you originally by three times!” Qi Yunxiao said somewhat apologetically. It seemed he was still a bit worried since he hadn’t improved the formation establishment magic tool’s power to what was previously agreed.

“Three times?” Han Li’s expression changed, his heart feeling extremely amazed.

A tenth of the Five Element Reversal Formation was already enough to completely satisfy Han Li, who felt there was no need for further improvement. Even a Core Formation cultivator such as Lei Wanhe had felt this formation was quite a pain to deal with. If he truly improved the formation to the point where it was three times more powerful, it could resist even Core Formation cultivators.

With this thought, Han Li couldn't help but want to look inside the wooden box. Meanwhile, Qi Yunxiao picked up the silver book and carefully looked at it.

When Han Li opened the box, he saw a set of formation flags and plates with oppressive Spiritual Qi.

Han Li took them out for a careful look. This set of magic tools had much more formation flags and formation plates than the previous set. Furthermore, the decorative design and written seals were obviously more complicated. It appeared that what he said wasn't false. Its strength was far greater than its previous iteration.

Han Li put away the formation flags with satisfaction and then took a look at Qi Yunxiao.

At this moment, Qi Yunxiao had lightly stroked 《Yunxiao Experience》with a smile. It seemed he made a similar inspection and confirmed the seal had remained.

“I am very satisfied with these improved set of formation

establishment magic tools. I have truly troubled you, fellow Daoist,” Han Li said with a slight smile.

“Senior’s words are over-exaggerating. This one is truly grateful that Senior returned this book with its seal intact. This Junior should be thanking you greatly!” When Qi Yunxiao heard Han Li’s words, he shook his head as if he were beating a drum with it and cordially replied.

Han Li smiled, and after saying a few more modest remarks, he chatted a bit with Qi Yunxiao.

The shopkeep came a moment later and served two cups of lovely emerald green tea.

The tea’s fragrance was clearly far richer than the tea from the “Clear Spring Teahouse”. Obviously, higher grade tea leaves released slightly heavier amounts of Spiritual Qi.

Under Qi Yunxiao’s eager invitation, Han Li took two sips. He immediately felt his mouth refreshed and his mind cleared. He couldn’t help but praised it, saying, “Good tea! I didn’t know tea leaves could be blended with Spiritual Qi. It’s too wonderful for words! I assume these must’ve personally be made by fellow Daoist. I am truly in admiration.” Han Li’s words were actually said with sincerity. To be able to blend Spiritual Qi with common tea leaves, this was something Han Li had never heard of. Furthermore, the tea’s fragrance was incomparable, far better than the top teas of the mortal world.

When Qi Yunxiao heard Han Li's words, he wore an embarrassed expression and hastily explained, "Senior misunderstands. This tea was not refined by this Junior. My close friend gave it to me as a present. These tea leaves were the result of nearly ten years of my close friend's research in the mortal world."

Chapter 276: Taking Action

“Close friend? Could it be the individual whom fellow Daoist wanted to save with the spirit herb?” Han Li seemed to have casually asked this, but he was inwardly very happy. He had been bitterly worried that he wouldn’t be able to raise the subject of that formation master by Qi Yunxiao’s side. He naturally couldn’t let this golden opportunity slip by.

Qi Yunxiao was stunned when Han Li asked this question and was a bit hesitant.

But soon after, he thought of something and made up his mind, nodding his head, “Senior is not wrong. This spirit tea was made this one’s close friend. As for that previous matter, it was thanks to medicine created from Senior’s thousand year-old spirit herb that my friend’s life was saved. However, although her life had been saved, her injury is recovering extremely slowly. Therefore.... Therefore, this Junior wants to shamelessly ask Senior if he has another thousand year-old spirit herb. Even if it isn’t a thousand year-old spirit herb, as long as it’s seven or eight hundred years old, it would fulfill my wish for my close friend to fully recover. This one is willing to promise all sorts of formation flags in exchange for the spirit herb.”

After that was said, Qi Yunxiao had a face full of anticipation and was attentively staring at Han Li.

When Han Li heard Qi Yunxiao’s words, he was slightly surprised, but his heart soon relaxed. Since the other party still sought something from Han Li, it seemed he would naturally

succeed in his request for the other party to repair the transportation formation.

However, his face naturally wore an awkward expression; he would make Qi Yunxiao feel like he would owe Han Li a favor!

With this thought, Han Li muttered to himself for a moment. After a long moment later, he said with reluctance, “This one does have such a spirit herb on hand. However, this one intended to refine a medicine pill with it and use it. This is truly....”

Although Han Li didn’t finish his sentence, the hesitant expression on his face was enough for Qi Yunxiao to imagine the difficulty of this matter.

After all, Qi Yunxiao should clearly know what refining a top-grade medicine pill signified to a cultivator.

When Qi Yunxiao first heard Han Li had such a medicinal herb on hand, he immediately revealed an appearance of wild happiness. However, when he heard the words that followed, his expression became extremely apprehensive. Without even waiting for Han Li to finish his sentence, he immediately said with a half-pleading tone, “Junior knows that making Senior Han Li give a spirit herb is a bit forceful. However, this one truly feels great anguish from seeing his dear friend suffering day after day! So long as Senior agrees to cede the spirit herb, this one will allow Senior to chose from this one’s formation establishment magic tools as he wishes. Even if Senior wishes to take them all, Junior will have no complaints.”

When Han Li heard the other party's words, his heart was greatly moved.

Even if this Qi Yunxiao's formation establishment magic tools weren't as abnormal as the "Five Elements Reversal Formation", they were sure to be rarely-seen quality goods. If he had several more sets on hand, he would be able to increase his defenses by no small amount. Even better were the formation spells with extremely powerful offensive capabilities; if he could trap strong enemies within the formations, it would also be another incisive method of attack.

However, the main objective of this trip was to have the other party restore the damaged transportation formation. If he were to take a few formation establishment magic tools, then this matter couldn't be fulfilled, and if he asked for too much, he would give the other party the impression that his greed was insatiable. Han Li did not currently wish for these two to become hostile towards him.

After Han Li pondered about this, he intended to refuse the other party's exchange and raise the matter about the transportation formation. But at this moment, the flustered yell of a young woman suddenly came from outside.

"Young Master Qi, it's bad! My clan's young madam has encountered mishap! Please save my clan's young madam!"

Qi Yunxiao's face immediately changed once the voice penetrated

the walls.

He hastily stood and left the room without even said anything to his guest, Han Li. The shopkeep standing to the side similarly ran out the room with a panicked and pale face.

Han Li raised his eyebrows, but his expression didn't change. Still, he felt puzzled and slowly walked out with hands behind his back.

Outside the room, Qi Yunxiao and the shopkeep were attentively and nervously listening to a talking woman who appeared eighteen or nineteen years old.

This girl was pretty and had fair skin. As she was talking about something, she had an anxious appearance. She immediately shut her mouth with fright when she saw a stranger, Han Li, walk out of the room. An expression of vigilance flashed from her eyes.

Seeing this, Han Li gave a smile without paying it any mind and stood still. He didn't walk any further.

But after Qi Yunxiao turned to look at Han Li, it appeared as he had grasped life-saving medicine and flew to Han Li's side. He excitedly pleaded to him, "Senior, this one's close friend is currently being restrained by cultivators with malicious intent. Right now, only Senior can save her. So long as Senior agrees to take action, this Junior will be sure to give heavy payment as equivalent thanks!"

“Could Daoist Friend Qi please give me a few details? Is the young woman spoke of, your dear friend, the formation spell master?” Han Li wrinkled his brow, asking with some surprise.

“That’s right! The Five Elements Reversal Formation establishment magic tools that Senior previously used were jointly refined by this one and that young lady!” Qi Yunxiao hastily said as he looked at Han Li with impatience.

It was at this moment that the pretty woman then discovered that she was incapable of seeing how deep Han Li’s cultivation was even with her cultivation base at the fifth layer of Qi Condensation. This caused her to open her mouth in shock and then look at Han Li with fear.

Han Li then turned his body to the woman and said with a deep voice, “Could this young woman explain it once more? I want to know the whole story!”

Although Han Li knew this was the best opportunity to gain favor, he needed to know the enemy’s strength and numbers. He didn’t wish to fail and be in need of rescue himself.

“....Oh! It’s like this. Today, the young lady and I arrived somewhere nearby...” When the pretty woman saw Han Li ask her this, she couldn’t help but repeat the story once through in a fluster.

Originally, this young woman’s young madam had ran out of high-quality tea leaves to refine into spirit tea. As per previous

custom, she went to the nearby Jade Cloud Mountain to pick a few, leaves, but she unexpectedly ran into a group of male Qi Condensation cultivators. When the master and servant saw so many cultivators appear, they already felt something was wrong and intended to immediately leave the mountain.

But who would have thought that there was a person from these group of cultivators who would recognize one of the women as a formation spell master who had set up a formation spell for some small clan. This person immediately informed this matter to his colleagues; As a result, this group was filled with evil intent and intended to capture this woman alive, forcing her to give them her knowledge of formation spells.

However, the young madam was exceptionally quick-witted and didn't wait for the opponent to act, having her servant rush off the mountain to escape. But as she herself was halfway down the mountain, she discovered people relentlessly pursuing her. They were growing increasingly closer and would soon overtake and capture her.

Without a better option, she could only use the formation flags she had on hand to arrange a simple formation spell in the middle of the forest, protecting herself. Then she had this servant rush towards Qi Yunxiao in order to call for help.

As Han Li heard the other party's account, he muttered to himself indecisively.

According to the young woman, the enemy consisted of only seven or eight Qi Condensation disciples. He no longer had any

qualms and quickly decided that he must help them.

With this thought, Han Li nodded his head and said, “We’ll follow the lead of this young lady!”

After saying this, under Qi Yunxiao’s grateful gaze, Han Li threw out his sleeve, and a small white boat appeared, enlarging itself before everyone’s eyes.

“Everyone, get onboard! We must save someone from danger. Although this magic tool is a bit small, it flies extremely fast and will have no problem flying with four or five people.” Han Li’s body flashed and reappeared in front of the small boat. He then turned his head and said this to the others.

Qi Yunxiao and the young woman came to a sudden realization and boarded the small boat. But when the shopkeep also thought to board it, Qi Yunxiao stopped him and said, “Uncle Lin, your cultivation is far too low. If you were to go, there would be many dangers. Please stay here! We will immediately return after we save her!”

When the shopkeep heard this, he appeared hesitant. But he knew that Qi Yunxiao meant him well, so he remained with some slight unwillingness.

Thus, Han Li and the others flew on the small boat and turned into a streak of white light, disappearing off the edge of the horizon.

Han Li quickly flew the Divine Wind Boat south with all his strength. Its quick speed caused the two passengers to keep their eyes wide open from surprise. Not long after, they arrived above a besieged formation spell in a forest.

At this moment, there were seven or eight people viciously attacking the spell formation with magic tools. It seemed the layer of faint azure light that covered the forest had weakened to the point of near destruction.

When Qi Yunxiao saw this, his eyes grew red, and he immediately wanted to jump off. However, Han Li held him still and insipidly said to him, “Don’t rush! It seems the magic tools they are using aren’t bad. From this alone, they seem to be from some cultivation clan. Since they knew this young lady was a formation spell master, even if you were to repel them here, they would continue to tangle with you in the future. It would be better for me to help you eliminate them cleanly and wipe away the problem entirely!”

When Qi Yunxiao heard that these people would unceasingly tangle with him in the future, he couldn’t help but angrily nod his head.

When Han Li saw this, he faintly smiled and then looked at the unknowing cultivators below; cold light flashed from his eyes.

He suddenly raised his two hands, and two streaks of black light and six streaks of yellow light flew out. In the blink of an eye, they arrived in front of these cultivators and easily encircled the frightened assailants. They all fell to the floor one by one, killed by

Han Li instantly.

Qi Yunxiao and that maid looked at the scene, overwhelmed with shock. Although they knew the difference between Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment cultivators was certain to be great, they did not think at all that Han Li would be able to quickly kill so many people with ease. It should be known that the highest cultivation base among these men was the twelfth layer. Qi Yunxiao himself was only at the ninth layer.

Han Li didn't pay any attention to these two's gazes of reverence and had the flying magic tool descend.

Without waiting for the Divine Wind Boat to completely touch the ground, Qi Yunxiao hastily and impatiently leaped off, rushing into the forest. He yelled with great nervousness, "Yin'er! Are you alright! The enemies have all died! You can come out now!"

Chapter 277: Xin Ruyin

When Han Li saw Qi Yunxiao throw himself into the forest, he widely smiled.

Although Han Li wasn't very experienced with the matters between men and women, after seeing him lose such self-control, it was quite obvious how Qi Yunxiao viewed this woman who was proficient in formation spells. It definitely wasn't merely a good friendship; it was most likely a relationship of deep affection between a man and woman. Why else would he be so nervous?

That servant girl also followed him, burning with anxiety.

Han Li patiently waited outside the forest. A moment later, Qi Yunxiao and that pretty servant girl were happily walking out the forest, accompanied by a blue-clothed woman.

With no trace of politeness, Han Li took a direct and careful look at this blue-clothed woman.

She was of medium stature, had a delicate, small nose, and a pair of bright eyes as clear as water. When she and Han Li looked at each other, she revealed a faint smile.

It seems this Qi Yunxiao had already told this woman about his identity.

To tell the truth, this woman's facial appearance was not

remarkable, not quite as good as that pretty servant girl.

However, her graceful and easy demeanor, refined movements, and black pupils that seemed to be able to speak more than made up for her somewhat lacking appearance. If someone were to see this woman, they would not feel this woman's appearance was lacking but would rather feel stunned. It was impossible to mistake who was servant and master among the pair.

When Han Li saw this woman's exceptionally elegant bearing, he felt a great headache.

He didn't need to guess. This woman was absolutely of the quick-witted, clever sort; a woman far more intelligent than normal. It was likely that negotiating with this lady would expend a great deal of effort; it absolutely wouldn't be as easy as dealing with Qi Yunxiao where he was in full control of the situation.

"Many thanks to Senior for coming to rescue me! This young woman is Xin Ruyin. I can't thank you enough!" The blue-clothed woman leisurely walked in front of Han Li and gracefully saluted him several times while saying this with composure. Her voice was as sweet and smooth as silver!

"Young Lady Xin, there is no need to be overly polite. This one only expended a bit of effort! However, let us quickly return. It's likely these people have some backing. If they have seniors nearby, it would be quite troublesome." Han Li politely said as he waved his hand, faintly urging the several people to hurry on their way.

When Qi Yunxiao heard Han Li's words, he somewhat anxiously nodded his head in agreement and said, "That's right Yin'er! Let us hurry and leave this place. This place is far too dangerous!"

Ever since Qi Yunxiao saw Xin Ruyin, his eyes hadn't parted from her spotlessly pure and dainty appearance. At this moment, he spoke incomparably intimately, causing Han Li to feel a bit sick from sappiness!

The two cheeks on Xin Ruyin's slightly red face quickly became flushed.

She glanced somewhat shyly at Qi Yunxiao, and after a moment of hesitation, she slightly opened her mouth and replied.

"Fine, Let use leave from here. However, these corpses..." Xin Ruyin looked at the corpses and thought of saying something else.

"This can be solved quickly by burning them into the earth!" Han Li said without paying it mind. He raised the five fingers of his right hand, and seven to eight small fireballs flew out, immediately turning the corpses to ash. Only their storage pouches remained on the ground.

Seeing Han Li destroy the corpses with such familiarity caused the woman's face to slightly change and her heart to slightly tremble!

But she wasn't some common frail girl; soon after, her face

turned to normal, and she spoke a bit with Qi Yunxiao.

“I have no use for the items in these storage pouches. If this young woman doesn't turn her nose against it, do not hesitate to go take them, but be sure not to leave any traces.” At this moment Han Li turned his head and gently said this to the pretty servant girl at Xin Ruyin's side.”

“Senior, are you truly giving them to me?” When this young servant girl heard Han Li, her face revealed a pleasant surprise. She couldn't help but ask again, finding it hard to believe.

When she saw Han Li lightly smile and nod his head in affirmation, she immediately said many words of thanks and happily ran over, gathering the storage pouches one by one. From her point of view, it was an absolutely happy occasion, as if the heavens had dropped a huge meat pie on her head. These pouches were sure to be filled with treasures!

When Xin Ruyin saw this scene, she was slightly startled. But soon after, her expression returned to normal, and after saying a few polite words to Han Li, she boarded the floating small boat with Qi Yunxiao.

After that pretty servant girl boarded while happily grasping the pile of storage bags holding high-grade magic tools, Han Li's body flashed and was the last to board the small boat. Spiritual power immediately flowed from his legs, and the boat magic tool flew off.

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Halfway on the journey back, the blue-clothed woman made a proposition to Han Li and Qi Yunxiao to land at her place so she could formally express her thanks for saving her life!

Having the opportunity to get closer to the longtime target of his affection, how could Qi Yunxiao possibly say the word “no”? He eagerly agreed. Han Li also felt that this was a good opportunity to mention his request to restore the transportation formation and did not oppose.

Thus, under Han Li’s control, the small boat turned and flew northwest at great speed.

Under Xin Ruyin’s directions, Han Li arrived at a small unremarkable mountain several hours later.

Apart from a bit of fog surrounding this mountain, Han Li didn’t notice anything noteworthy. It was extremely ordinary, much like countless other nameless mountains of the world.

But Han Li clearly understood that a formation spell master’s residence would have certain protective measures in place, most likely an impressive formation spell. However, he didn’t know much about the Dao of Formation Spells, and although he wasn’t able to detect anything mysterious nearby, he didn’t dare to be the slightest bit contemptuous.

Under the direction of the blue-clothed woman, Han Li stopped at a group of bamboo rooms halfway up the mountain. This place

was Xin Ruyin's residence.

Xin Ruyin brought Han Li and Qi Yunxiao to a rather large bamboo room to rest. She and her servant went to another room to bathe and change clothes. After all, the two had quite a bit of dust on their clothes after being relentlessly pursued. To girls who naturally love cleanliness, this was a truly unbearable matter.

Han Li sat on a bamboo chair and looked at the restless Qi Yunxiao with interest. From time to time, Qi Yunxiao would walk to the door and take several glances outside. It was as if this short moment was a difficult wait of three years for him. It was the appearance of someone deeply in love.

Han Li found this truly amusing, and he couldn't help but slightly raise the corner of his mouth, revealing a somewhat mysterious smile. When Qi Yunxiao just happened to turn around, he happened to see this.

Qi Yunxiao completely blushed and made some vague explanations before sitting down at his original seat with embarrassment.

"A graceful and virtuous woman and a noble man make a good match. This is a just and honorable matter! Why does Fellow Daoist Qi mind it so much?" Han Li sampled some of the high-quality tea on the table. After smiling indifferently, he said this with an appearance of ease.

"Senior! No.... I don't...."

Qi Yunxiao became increasingly flustered!

At this moment, that servant girl came in and Qi Yunxiao finally relaxed. Not long after, Xin Ruyin walked into the room with a graceful bearing. Her white garment resembled a lotus blossom in bloom, causing those who saw her to become extremely dazzled.

“Ruyin will engrave this debt to Senior Han and Elder Brother Qi in her heart! Please let this humble woman pour you cups of wine and tea as a token of appreciation!” After Xin Ruyin entered the room, she went to the side of the servant girl and took a pot of tea from her. Then she sincerely poured a cup for the two.

After Han Li took the cup of tea, he bitterly smiled and inwardly sighed, “I truly don’t understand this woman! Her words don’t reveal anything. Although she hasn’t promised anything, she isn’t letting us choose anything either!”

When Qi Yunxiao saw that his beloved was serving him tea, he was happy beyond recognition! When he drank a cup of tea, he didn’t taste it in the slightest. He only giggled foolishly without end!

When Xin Ruyin saw Qi Yunxiao with this appearance, she felt a great headache. She could only turn toward Han Li and chat a bit. She thought to make some inquiries about Han Li’s identity and see which sect or great clan he was from.

After all, a Foundation Establishment cultivator was certain to

have some backing.

Naturally, Han Li wasn't naive enough to easily reveal his background and deliberately answered vaguely, skirting around her inquiries.

After the chat was over, the woman unexpectedly didn't end up with any useful information. This caused Xin Ruyin to feel gloomy and even more vigilant against Han Li!

From Xin Ruyin's perspective, even if Han Li came to help so quickly, Han Li may also hold similar intentions as that previous group. To guard against the unexpected, she naturally became far more careful and used her mind to the greatest extent.

“Senior Han, since you have saved Ruyin, do not hesitate to choose any formation flag and plates that this one has already refined. At this moment, this one happens to have many sets. Could Senior take a look and see if he is satisfied with them?”

Qi Yunxiao finally became a bit sober from his infatuation and said a few words to Han Li.

This caused Han Li to be a bit surprised and also greatly happy. He was finally able to mention the problem he was most concerned with.

When Xin Ruyin heard this, she was startled. But soon after, she smiled toward Qi Yunxiao with great appreciation. This caused Qi

Yunxiao to further giggle foolishly with happiness.

“With regards to formation flags and plates, there’s no rush! This one has another matter for which he wishes to seek help from Fellow Daoist Xin. If you are able to help this one solve this matter, there will be no need to bestow any rewards. Instead, this one will give you an eight-hundred-year-old spirit herb that I had planned to refine a pill so that you can treat Fellow Daoist Xin’s illness.” Han Li’s sudden words caused the two to become greatly shocked.

“Senior wishes to cede the spirit herb?” When Qi Yunxiao heard these words, he couldn’t help but stand and simultaneously ask this with pleasant surprised.

At this moment, he was completely absorbed in his wish to treat his beloved’s illness and felt greatly moved.

Chapter 278: Half-Year Appointment

Being the one involved, Xin Ruyin started to become similarly excited!

After all, this regarded a complete recovery from her long-lasting affliction. However, her expression changed from dark to bright several times. She hesitated and said while biting her red lips, “What sort of matter does Senior wish for Junior to help with? Please do not hesitate to say! As long as it doesn’t violate my conscious and morality, this young woman will certainly agree!”

When Xin Ruyin said this and looked at Han Li with clear eyes, she feared Han Li would be unable to answer to her request.

Seeing this woman’s cautiousness, Han Li couldn’t help but give a knowing smile.

This reminded him of his own circumstances at the beginning of his journey of cultivation. He had also been very cautious and feared that treading the wrong path would result in his death.

“Fellow Daoist Xin doesn’t need to be so nervous. I only want fellow Daoist to restore a formation spell. So long as you are able to restore it, I will offer you the spirit herb!” Han Li soon answered with a calm expression. He didn’t evade her straight gaze, but rather met it with a magnanimous gaze.

After Xin Ruyin heard this, she was a bit skeptical.

She then let out a breath and relaxed, blossoming a lovely appearance. She said, “If it is truly a matter of restoration, then it will be no problem! Ruyin will do all she can to restore it. Senior, please be at ease.”

The girl’s originally neutral expression suddenly became a clear and bright smile. Han Li couldn’t help but be stunned by the beauty of her charm! There was no need to mention that her long-time admirer, Qi Yunxiao, had long since fallen into a spell of imbecility from the smile and was incapable of waking himself.

When Xin Ruyin saw the strangeness of Han Li’s gaze, she couldn’t help blush a bit more, causing her charm to become even more lovely.

At this moment, Han Li hurriedly restrained his previously out-of-control mind and continued, “Truthfully speaking, although this one knows that Fellow Daoist Yin’s research into formation spells is certainly deep, I don’t know if it can truly be repaired. Also, the original formation is incapable of being moved, thus this one made a copy of its designs. I hope fellow Daoist will be able to look at the designs and repair it!”

With this said, Han Li took out the jade slip from his storage pouch and handed it over to Xin Ruyin. She immediately injected her consciousness into it with great curiosity.

After examining it, she involuntarily cried out from shock, “Ancient transportation formation?!”

When Han Li heard her shout, the biggest worry in his heart disappeared without a trace!

‘As expected, that transportation formation was an ancient transportation formation. Now, let's see if this woman can repair it.’

As Han Li thought this, he couldn't help but pay close attention to Xin Yurin's facial expression, afraid that she would reveal an expression of embarrassment!

After Qi Yunxiao heard the words “ancient transportation formation”, his face became filled with amazement, and his eyes widened from astonishment.

After no less than the time it took for an incense stick to burn had passed, Xin Ruyin took a long stretch and eventually withdrew her consciousness from the jade slip. Then she lowered her head and entered deep contemplation for a moment before raising her elegant head, earnestly saying to Han Li, “This is a genuine ancient transportation formation. Someone at my level normally wouldn't be able to repair a completely ruined ancient transportation formation, but the damage on this formation is quite small, mainly at one small corner. Fortunately, I'm familiar with this specific portion of the formation spell, having studied a few ancient formation spells. As a result, I should have a good chance to restore this ancient transportation formation.”

When Han Li heard those words, his naturally filled with

happiness, but her following words were a devastating blow.

“However, these ancient spell formations are rarely used, and my research into them isn’t very deep. Thus, Senior must give me some time so I can completely restore the design of the ancient transportation formation in the jade slip!” Xin Ruyin continued with a face of slight embarrassment.

“Of course. How long does Fellow Daoist Xin think it will take? I will certainly return by then.” After Han Li thought for a moment, he agreed.

“Even though I only studied ancient formations for a short time, half a year should be enough!” Xin Ruyin said without the slightest of hesitation. It seems she had come up with an estimate earlier.

“That’s fine. After half a year, I will come to pick up the restored design. I hope young lady Xin will not disappoint me!” When Han Li heard this, he nodded his head with a faint smile.

At this moment, Han Li formally entrusted the restoration of the ancient transportation formation to this female formation spell master, Xin Ruyin. Then he spent the afternoon further chatting with Qi Yunxiao and company before bidding his farewell.

Before departure, Han Li urged the two to be a bit more careful. It would be best to move farther away. After all, there would certainly be people sent to track down the killers of that group of cultivations. Since they were in the vicinity, they would truly be too easy to discover.

When Han Li said this, Qi Yunxiao and Xin Ruyin took a look at each other and displayed an appearance of embarrassment. They declined to comment on Han Li's suggestion to change residence.

Although Han Li felt baffled and worried, he didn't inconvenience them with further words and hurriedly flew his magic tool to the State of Yue.

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The capital city of the State of Yue, the renowned [Yuejing](#)!

(TL Note: in Yuejing越京, 越 Yue is the name of the country and 京 jing means the capital of the country. So the name of the city literally means the capital city of Yue.)

Not only was it the largest city of the State of Yue, it also happened to be located at the very center of the country. Its roads led in every direction, making it the heart of the entire nation's economic trade.

Naturally, the land of such a city had long been completely occupied. Not only was the price of housing several times greater than that of other cities, but there were also many individuals willing to pay this price but none willing to sell!

After all, living in Yuejing itself was a symbol of one's status.

Also, the entire city of Yuejing was divided into four districts:

north, south, east, west.

The imperial city was located in the north district. Naturally, only members of the royal family were permitted to live there. Across the city was the south district, home of bureaucrats and officials of all ranks. So long as one monotonically spent half their time on duty, they would have the qualifications to live there. If no one in a household hold an official's position, that household would naturally be forced to move to another district!

Chapter 279: The Great Wealthy Qin Residence

Within the city of Yuejing, the south district was distinctly different from the west district.

The west district's tall and great residences were actually jaggedly arranged flat rooms. Those who lived there were all lower-class workers with odd jobs, small peddlers and merchants, and other impoverished people. Naturally, a portion were loafers who came from other districts aftering being kicked out of their household.

Far and away from the west region, the rich merchant households existed in the east district.

Although these households didn't have anyone working in the bureaucracy and couldn't live in the south district, their grand residence and courtyards were more magnificent than any other. None of them spared their great wealth in order to bring their households name to fame, suppressing other nearby great families and putting themselves on top.

Naturally, there were a few famous households that the others nearby fundamentality couldn't compete against. Not only was the amount of land they owned great, but also their riches and prestige far exceeded the others'. The people who lived in these households were merchants that were beyond extremely wealthy

In a corner of the east district, such an extremely rich and

powerful household existed, the Qin Residence.

Their residence spanned over one and a half acres. If one knew exactly how much land cost in Yuejing, one would be speechless for a long while.

Not only was the Qin Clan extremely wealthy, but they also controlled a fourth of the copper mines in the State of Yue. Furthermore, it was said that their clan master possessed remarkable ability and had officials that specifically spoke on their behalf in the royal court.

As such, even the servants of this great and noble household held great confidence, having more sway in their household than other servants.

The gatekeeper of the Qin Residence, Qin Gui, also thought as such.

Every time someone came to the Qin Residence requesting to meet with the clan master, regardless of their identity or background, even if they were a bureaucrat, they were always completely polite towards even a low servant of the Qin Clan and didn't dare to offend them in the slightest.

As time passed, this caused Qin Gui to feel as if he himself were superior.

Thus, every time someone sought to pay respects and meet

someone from the Qin Clan, their gifts naturally couldn't be small. Otherwise, Qin Gui wouldn't look upon them favorably; he might even wait three or four days before reporting their presence to a superior.

Naturally, if a great character knocked on their door, Qin Gui would act in accordance to custom, complete loyal subservience.

Towards those young masters and young madams who entered and left the estate frequently, he would eagerly and attentively be at their beck and call.

Although many of the masters whom Qin Gui served weren't completely satisfied with him, word spread recently that he would be promoted to become an external steward and would go out to take control of some business. After Qin Gui heard this, he became increasingly happy, and in the following days, he felt that his steps were as light as a feather.

Right now, Qin Gui was arrogantly sitting a stool and lying in a shady, cool spot against the gate. This morning, the clan master had left to discuss some business. The several young masters and young madams had already left with their noble friends to take a stroll at Chongshan Temple. Currently, apart from the madams within the estate, only the widowed young madam Biao remained.

This caused to him let out a breath of relaxation, glad of the chance to take a break.

When Qin Gui was half asleep with a light cool wind blowing

against them, he suddenly heard the shy voice of a male youth in front of him.

“Excuse me, is this the Qin Residence?”

Just as Qin Gui was about to fall asleep, this voice had disturbed him and woken him up. He felt extremely wronged and couldn't help but loudly yell with great anger while his eyes remained closed, “Who are you shouting to! Are you wailing at a funeral! Can't you see that the great Gui is lying down!”

With that said, Qin Gui was completely unwilling to open his eyes to take a look. His face wore an extremely resentful expression.

From the other party's timid voice, he felt that the owner of the voice was but a minor character who dared to treat him so imprudently.

Qin Gui eventually had a clear look at the person before him, a coarsely-dressed man who appeared about twenty-four years old. He had an extremely ordinary appearance and had an early smell coming from his body. He was clearly one of those country bumpkins that had just arrived from the countryside!

(TL Note: the word meaning country side bumpkin is actually earth steam bun 土包子, heh; he's a steambun(idiot) that came from the countryside.)

Seeing this, Qin Gui became increasingly arrogant.

He sat up from his chair, and without saying anything further, he began showering down admonishments nonstop. It was as if disturbing the great Qin Gui's rest was a severe and unforgivable sort of crime!

While he was reprimanding the newcomer, Qin Gui's saliva splattered all around and continued spraying there for more than the time it took to make a cup of tea. This rustic youth appeared as if he hadn't understood the great Qin Gui and appeared to at a loss for words. He could only listen to Qin Gui's tirade with a foolish expression!

After a long while, Qin Gui clearly vented the fiery resentment within him before reluctantly stopping his verbal attack.

Soon after, he gave the youth a slanted look. It seemed as if he wanted to say something to him. He then casually asked, "What are you doing at our Qin Residence? We aren't lacking laborers or servants. Hurry up and leave! The servants at this residence aren't the same as other servants! We won't take in those with muddy origins. Come back after you find a backer!"

Relying on his past experiences, Qin Gui immediately concluded this youth whose clothes still stunk of dirt was certainly someone who wildly imagined to work at the Qin Residence!

"I'm not looking for work... Qin Yan is my uncle. My family told me to deliver this letter to Uncle Qin!" The youth had recovered

from the tempest of verbal abuse. After hearing Qin Gui's words, he took out a wrinkled letter from his bosom and stuttered, giving Qin Gui an explanation.

“What? The lord is your uncle!”

Qin Gui had felt his mouth go dry, so he went to go take a few gulps from a nearby teapot. But when he immediately heard the youth's words, he spit out a mouthful of tea from shock and asked this with a face pale from fright.

“This... I also don't know. But my family had me address him as Uncle Qin!” The youth shook his head with a somewhat embarrassed appearance.

However at this moment, Qin Gui no longer dared to easily mock him. If this person truly had some relation to his own lord, then nothing good would come out of it.

Then after a moment of hesitation, he carefully asked, “That letter, could you let this one take a look at it? Please be at ease, esteemed sir. This one only wants to look at the surface of the letter. He doesn't dare to tear it open!”

When the youth heard what Qin Gui said, he unexpectedly agreed, nodding his head. As he handed it over, he muttered something, “I originally wanted to hand this letter to you so you could quickly hand it over to Uncle Qin!”

Qin Gui took the extremely wrinkled letter and immediately looked at it several times.

Ordinary servants normally wouldn't be able to read, but during Qin Gui's childhood, he had spent half a year in a private school and was actually literate. As such, the much desired duty as gatekeeper fell upon him.

“To be personally opened by Honorable Nephew Qin Yan!”

These large pitch-black words on the letter caused Qin Gui's heart to beat wildly. From their tone, it seemed the letter was written by his own lord's senior.

With this thought, Qin Gui's face immediately changed. With great effort, he squeezed out a faint smile and said to the youth, “Young Master, our clan's lord is not here right now, but his wives are within. Would you like to pass this letter onto his wives?” Qin Gui couldn't help but greatly change his attitude and immediately upgrade the youth's title.

“This won't do! This letter must be personally opened by Uncle Qin!” After the youth hesitate for a moment, he resolutely shook his head.

“So it's like that. Then should I first make a report to the madams and see how they respond to your esteemed self?”

Qin Gui didn't dare to let the youth leave. If this were an

important matter and he were the one to interfere, then great misfortune would come around to meet him. But if he handed this matter over to the madams, then it wouldn't matter what he did; as a long-time servant, he had his own scheming.

The youth readily agreed.

After Qin Gui let out a breath of relief, he hastily went to call for a passing servant to help him watch the youth and ran into the residence.

When other servants came across him and saw that he was running as if his buttocks were on fire, they were a bit shocked.

Qin Gui immediately ran to the back court and said a few words to the head maid there before returning to the entrance to deliver a response with relief.

Having returned to the entrance, Qin Gui hastily said a few words to the youth with a smile. A young attractive maid ran over.

When she arrived in front of the two, she took several curious glances at the completely rustic youth and relayed a madam's reply. The youth would first rest in a side room and wait for the return of the lord before his identity was judged to be true or false. After all, there were a great many members of the Qin Residence; he could be the child of a senior's concubine that came knocking on their door!

Since the higher ups had already dealt with this issue, Qin Gui felt at ease and continued to guard the main gate.

That young maid then brought the youth to wait at a guest room for the time being.

On the way, several people saw the youth's rustic appearance and glanced at him several times in surprise, causing the youth to greatly feel uneasy. He simply lowered his head and continued following while looking the young servant girl's back.

When the maid turned her head and saw the youth's strange behavior, she couldn't help but chuckle. She looked several at the man with beaming smiles, finding it quite entertaining.

When a side room in the front wing was arranged for the youth, the young maid repeatedly warned the youth to not run around and returned back to report while giggling.

After the young maid left the room, the youth with the originally clumsy appearance suddenly straightened his back, and the foolish dullness in his eyes could no longer be seen. This person seemed to appear confident and at ease. The slightest trace of his rustiness could no longer be seen.

"I truly did not think this Qin Clan was actually so well-known! It's impossible for the Devil Dao to let such an obvious target pass by." The youth took a look outside the room and slightly wrinkled his brow, muttering a few words to himself.

Han Li had exhausted himself by flying at top speed for over ten days before finally arriving at Yuejing. The Qin Residence was the target Li Huayuan requested Han Li to protect.

However, when Han LI thought of the identity Li Huayuan arranged from him, he couldn't help but feel greatly gloomy.

In the letter, Li Huayuan had the Qin Clan Master arrange the identity of a Qin Clan side branch descendant, causing Han Li to play a destitute relative from the countryside. This was to fool the Qin Residence so he could remain for a long time.

Although Han Li disliked the identity of being a destitute youngster from the countryside, his disguise didn't require any effort. After all, Han Li was the genuine child of peasant family of some remote countryside village. Thus, he didn't need to put much effort to closely resemble the right tone and mannerisms.

After Han Li shut off the room, he meditated and refined Qi on the bed. He hoped that while he protected the Qin Residence, he would be able to slightly progress his own cultivation.

It was already evening by the time Han Li completed a cycle of cultivation. At this moment, someone finally knocked on the door.

Han Li's spirit shook, and the expression on his face soon completely vanished. He immediately resumed the appearance of the foolish rustic youngster.

Once he opened the door, he saw a servant standing before him.

“My clan’s lord has returned. The madams are currently calling for you. Follow me!” The servant said to Han Li with no trace of politeness. He then turned around and left. It seems Han Li wasn’t worthy enough for the servant to put him in his eyes.

This was of no surprise. The gatekeeper Qin Gui was the same.

As a madam’s trusted aide, he had seen many destitute relatives of the Qin Residence arrive every year like an autumn wind. Naturally, he didn’t particularly pay them much mind.

This person thought was it was most likely the lord would meet with this country bumpkin, give him some silver, and then send him on his way. He basically wouldn’t stay in this residence for much longer!

Han Li sincerely agreed and followed this person out of the side room, heading straight towards the Qin Residence’s receiving hall.

At this moment, there was a graceful and magnificent madam who appeared over forty years old. She was sitting next to the Qin Clan Master Qin Yan and talking about Han Li’s arrival.

“Since he dares to come knocking on our door with a letter, he most likely isn’t a fake! It seems he was truly sent from a clan senior to come visit us.”

“Let us see what request he has in the end. If it isn’t excessive, then we will completely satisfy it! Don’t snobbishly cast out this branch clan member and soil our reputation. We cannot lose face because of this.”

Qin Yan was over fifty years old, but because he had took care of his health well, he appeared only forty years old, not elderly in the slightest. After he drank a gulp of swallow nest tea and moistened his throat, he said this leisurely.

Chapter 280: Interview

“Lord clearly understands that our clan does not lack silver. However, our face cannot be ruined in the slightest!” His wife sitting across from him said a smile. She embodied the image of a perfect wife.

When Qin Yan saw this, he was completely satisfied!

This Third Madam had followed him for so many years but her consideration for finer details hadn't decreased in the slightest, causing him to feel more reassured in them!

Even ordinary matters of all sizes with regards to the Qin Residence were handed over to her. Furthermore, her orders were always extremely satisfactory.

“Lord, I have already sent people to fetch him. After lord husband sees him, I will handle this small matter!” His wife continued, speaking with a gentle voice.

When Qin Yan heard this, he faintly smiled, but when he thought to say something else, a servant made a report from outside the room.

“Lord, Qin Ping has brought the best. Do you want to call him in now?”

“Tell Qin Ping to bring him in!”

Without deeply thinking, Qin Yan gave his command and simply closed his mouth. He then gave an apologetic smile to his third wife.

“I will follow your orders!”

The servant agreed and spoke no further.

At the guest room, Qin Ping walked in with a simple-minded youth following behind him.

As this male youth walked in, he looking left to right in the guest receiving room as if he were extremely curious about everything in the room.

When the two walked into the hall, Qin Ping made his report and automatically withdrew. The only one who remained was the youth restlessly facing Qin Yan and his wife.

When Qin Yan and his third wife saw the youth's bewildered expression, she couldn't help but look at him with a knowing smile. Qin Yan lightly coughed and then amiably said to the youth, “I've heard this little brother has a letter for Senior Qin. Is this matter true? Could you hand that letter over to me so I could take a look?”

The youth, Han Li, looked at the Qin Clan Master and revealed some hesitation. With a bit of uncertainty, he asked, “Are you

really Uncle Qin? My grandfather said from his own mouth that this letter could only be given to Uncle Qin himself!”

When the third wife heard Han Li’s words, she was slightly startled but soon smiled, almost unable to restrain her laughter.

Inside the main guest receiving hall of the Qin Residence, how could anyone dare to arrogantly pretend to be the Qin Clan Master? This youngster’s question was truly amusing!

When Qin Yan heard this, he blankly stared for a moment before revealing a wry smile.

With no better option, he could only say, “This one is the genuine Qin Clan Master. However, whether or not I am your esteemed self’s Uncle Qin, I must read the letter before I know!”

Qin Yan appeared to be beaten, much to the amusement of his third wife watching from the side. Within Yuejing, nearly no one did not know of the renowned master of the Qin Clan. But who would have thought this rustic younger would have actually have doubts? It truly made for a good story!

Having heard Qin Yan’s words, confidence bubbled forth on Han Li’s face, and he brought out the crinkled letter, quickly creasing it before handing it over to Qin Yan.

Qin Yan, who had long lost his patience, had difficulty resisting the urge to go over and snatch the letter but managed to maintain

his poise until he received it.

However, he didn't immediately open up the letter. Instead, he took a deep look at Han Li and suddenly put the letter on the table, lightly clapping his hands two times.

Clap Clap. An old man with a head full of white hair walked into the hall, wearing an azure jacket.

Without saying anything further, Qin Yan pointed to the letter. The old man then immediately advanced towards the letter. He brought the letter under a bright light and carefully observed it. In the end, he returned the letter to the table.

“There are no problems.”

After spitting out these words, the old man bowed and retreated. He hadn't made a single noise this entire time, as if he were a ghost.

Feeling assured, Qin Yan faintly squinted at Han Li, and when he saw Han Li's baffled expression, he couldn't help but smile.

Then without any further doubt, he skillfully opened the letter and took out the letter for a close look.

When the third wife saw this, she gave Han Li friendly smiles. She then raised a teacup in front of her, wanting to take a sip.

However, before the cup even touched her lips, she saw Qin Yan pant as he read the letter. He suddenly stood with a face filled with extreme and bizarre amazement.

“Lord, what’s the matter? Could it be the letter is fake?” The third wife was shocked, hastily putting down her tea cup and asked with great concern.

“No, this letter is genuine! Furthermore, it is a letter from my Senior to whom I owe great favor.” Qin Yan’s expression returned to normal almost instantly, his tone of voice once again quite calm.

Then he looked at his beloved wife as if there was nothing wrong and sized up Han Li.

“Your esteemed self is called Han Li?” Lord Qin inquired. Although his tone was the same as before, the third wife somehow felt something was amiss!

Just as this madam met with doubt, Han Li nodded with all his strength, “That’s right! I am Han Li! Is it as my grandpa has said? Can I stay here?”

“Hehe! Of course. When I was a child, I saw Elder Li Huayuan with my father. I did not think that today I would see his descendant. I will treat you as if you were my own nephew.” Qin Yan suddenly gave a hearty laugh. His loud and clear voice caused the nearby servants to look at each other in dismay. They did not know why their clan master was so happy within the guest hall.

“Come! Accompany with me a nearby room and tell me how Elder Li Huayuan is doing. As for the others, they are not allowed to follow. My dear nephew Han Li and I will have a proper chat.” Qin Yan grabbed Han Li’s arm and said this cordially. Then he dragged Han Li to the side door and blocked his third wife, who had also wanted to follow.

This caused his third wife to feel greatly shocked and confused!

She could only helplessly look on at Lord Qin and Han Li as they left through the side door. However, she didn’t dare to disobey and secretly follow them.

At this moment, she had a head full of doubt and suspicion!

Han Li followed Qin Yan, and they arrived at an extremely quiet side hall.

Without saying anything further, Qin Yan turned an ancient vase that was decorating the hall. Soon after, a concealed room suddenly appeared from the wall.

When Qin Yan saw this, he entered without the slightest hesitation. After Han Li faintly smiled for a moment, he followed him in.

Although the concealed room wasn’t very large, it was fully furnished!

Not only were there desks and chairs but there was also a bookshelf about three meters high within the room; the room appeared extremely refined.

“Since your esteemed self came from Immortal Li’s sect, then you should be a cultivator. Just now in the guest hall, I was extremely rude. I hope Immortal Han won’t blame me.” When Qin Yan sealed off the secret room, he apologized to Han Li with a respectful expression.

“It was nothing. I can’t blame those who didn’t know! Besides, this act will have to continue.” After Han Li casually sat down in the chair next to him, he said this without much care. At this moment, his appearance completely changed and resumed his confident, easy bearing.

“Many thanks to Lord Immortal’s magnanimity!”

When Qin Yan heard this, he grew even more respectful. He then stood at the side and didn’t reveal the slightest dissatisfaction.

After all, what did it mean to be an Immortal cultivator? Qin Yan clearly understood this; they were living legends equivalent to gods!

Even more, without the help of that Immortal Li, his Qin Clan absolutely wouldn’t have been as illustrious and prestigious as it was today. In heart and appearance, Qin Yan didn’t dare to be disrespectful in the slightest.

“Why don’t you sit, Qin Clan Master? There is no need to be overly polite! The Immortal Li you spoke of is actually my own master, so you can’t be considered a stranger to the Li Clan.” Han Li answered with a smile.

“I do not dare. This one is but a mortal. How could I be disrespectful to an Immortal? This one will stand to the side and listen to Immortal Han’s commands.” Qin Yan repeatedly waved his hand, refusing to sit down. This caused Han Li to thoughtfully mutter to himself for a moment, but he did not further press him.

“I do not know what brings Immortal Han to this place. Immortal Li’s letter only mentioned your identity as an Immortal. The letter didn’t mention any specific matters. Could you please inform me about a thing or two?” Qin Yan carefully asked the question he was most concerned with.

His father had explained to him before he passed away that Immortal Li, who greatly favored the Qin Clan, would only appear when there was danger, personally bringing his fellow sect members to provide assistance. But what danger had the Qin Clan come across now?

Han Li looked at him and saw that the Qin Clan’s master appeared worried. After another moment of thought, he said with deliberation, “The matter is as such. It involves the cultivators of foreign countries. We received information that...”

With an ordinary expression, Han Li slowly narrated to Qin Yan

how the Six Devil Dao Sects would likely act against the Qin Clan by using terms that a mortal would most likely understand. This greatly shocked the Qin Clan Master.

After half a day, Qin Yan finally stuttered out, “This... the cultivators of other countries want to act against us mortals? This... how is this good?”

This Qin Clan Master was at a total loss of what to do.

Han Li faintly smiled and calmly comforted him, “There is no need for the Qin Clan Master to be worried. The cultivators infiltrating into the State of Yue have low magic power. Under my watch, they won’t be able to easily act against your clan!”

Chapter 281: The Qin Residence And Young Madam Biao

After two hours had passed, Han Li left the secret room with Qin Yan, once again returning to his country bumpkin appearance.

Having returned to the guest room, the Qin Clan Master looked at his third wife and immediately ordered them to arrange a clean room in the back of the residence as Honorable Nephew Han would be staying with them for an extended time.

The surface reason was plain. As his Senior, the lord wanted to cultivate this Junior and pay back the kindness that the boy's elders had bestowed upon him.

When the third wife saw this, her jaw dropped, but she didn't say any words of opposition!

When the exceedingly shrewd woman clearly heard this, she knew that Qin Yan already made his decision and wouldn't change his mind. Furthermore, she could perceive that this Honorable Nephew Han had something suspicious going on with her lord husband.

But since Qin Yan didn't tell any of the particulars, she naturally wouldn't perform any actions that would provoke disfavor.

However, she had guessed with a bit of wild imagination that since he was so serious toward this Honorable Nephew Han, it was

possible that when Qin Yan was young, he had left an illegitimate child while he was out fondling flowers and trampling grass. How else could he turn so pale from reading the letter and be so cordial right after?

The more the lively-minded third wife thought of this, the greater she felt this to be true. She felt a bit unhappy, but she appeared as if nothing happened and acted increasingly familiar toward Han Li.

As such, under Lord Qin's repeated suggestions, Han Li followed Qin Ping to see his residence until he was fully satisfied.

This time, Qin Ping's expression wasn't as rigid as before. Instead, his face wore a smile as he continuously addressed him as "Young Master Han". He had selectively forgotten his previously cold behavior.

Although Han Li appeared overwhelmed by a superior's favor, he secretly sighed to this mortal servant. His art of changing in the direction of the blowing wind was truly superb. He was unexpectedly able to switch from arrogance to deference without the slightest appearance of embarrassment.

He didn't know whether to say that his face was thick-skinned or if he was long accustomed to such events.

Soon after Qin Ping brought Han Li on a small path to the back of the residence. They arrived at a peaceful three-room courtyard.

The exquisite and refined surroundings were exceptionally peaceful, causing Han Li to inwardly nod his head; it was very much to his liking.

It seems this Qin Yan had gone through quite a bit of thought to give him such a suitable dwelling.

“Young Master Han, this is your residence! This is the best courtyard within the Qin Residence. If someone were not the lord’s valued guests, they basically wouldn’t be allowed to live here!” After Qin Ping let Han Li into the courtyard, he fawningly gave Han Li an explanation.

Han Li scratched his head and naively grinned. He repeatedly giggled as if he didn’t know what to say.

With great tact, Qin Ping switched to a different subject, “Young Master Han hasn’t eat dinner yet, no? This servant will go the kitchen and bring you some food. Please wait for a moment!”

With that said, Qin Ping respectfully withdrew from the courtyard and left.

As Han Li saw this person gradually grow farther, he faintly smiled and entered the rooms.

The room’s arrangements greatly matched the environment, each piece of furniture being uniquely elegant.

After he went through it once through, Han Li found it increasingly agreeable. He couldn't help but think of who arranged the place like this.

That Qin Ping had moved quite quickly! Not long after, a female servant arrived with a large bamboo tray holding food.

Smelling the fragrant scent of food, Han Li, who had fasted for several years, felt a bit ravenous and impolitely swept clear the several delicate dishes with a bowl of rice.

In the end, Qin Ping saw what remained of the meal and naturally found it a bit funny. But his appearance still remained respectful as he invited Han Li to the hall. Lord Qin wanted to introduce Han Li to the members of the Qin Residence.

.....

When Han Li arrived at the guest hall for the second time, it wasn't just Qin Yan and the Third Madam. There were also twenty to thirty men and women sitting and standing about.

When Qin Yan called out Han Li to sit beside him with great familiarity, a few of the older members within the hall were surprised, but the others didn't react. The young madams and lords of the Qin Clan, however, were unable to keep their calm. The more favored young master immediately asked with dissatisfaction:

“Grandfather, who is this brother? Us brothers and sisters have never seen him before; could you have called us here because of this person?”

Qin Yan naturally heard the unhappiness in his grandson's voice, but he didn't give him any face, instead glaring at him before saying coldly:

“Get back! Do you have the right to speak in this place? What ‘this person’, ‘that person’! This is Han Li, my Honorable Nephew Han. His elder has bestowed our Qin clan with great favor during a time of life and death. You are forbidden from being disrespectful to him!”

This sentence from Qin Yan instantly caused everyone in the room apart from his third wife to cause a commotion.

Various conjectures and curious gazes simultaneously landed on Han Li, who wore a perfect unsettled appearance, shifting around a few times as if needles were being poked into his rear.

As for the Qin Clan's young master, he silently retreated, his face alternating between frightened red and embarrassed red.

He absolutely did not expect that Qin Yan, who normally doted on him, would now speak so mercilessly towards him. This caused him to lose a lot of face in front of so many brothers and sisters!

Because of this matter, this young master naturally would not

have any goodwill towards Han Li! Of course, he was not so naive that he would make any ill-intentioned moves towards Han Li, especially after Qin Yan had given such orders.

After all, it seemed like this country bumpkin had a very high standing in his grandfather's heart. He didn't wish to lose Qin Yan's favor because of this matter.

With this person set as an example, other people naturally would not make any hostile movements. Instead, many people revealed kind appearances after meeting Han Li's gaze.

At this time, Qin Yan pointed out and introduced all the people in the room to Han Li with a smile:

“This is my eldest son Qin Zhi, who is currently helping me organize all of the business in Yuejing. He has a pretty good head on him. This is my second son.....”

Even as Han Li pretended to wildly nod his head, he secretly memorized every Qin Clan member that Qin Yan introduced; after all, these people were the ones that he needed to protect!

However, this elderly Lord Qin could really procreate; in total, he had five sons and three daughters, and he even had quite a few grandsons and granddaughters.

In their midst, the eldest and second son all seemed to be around thirty years old and even had families. The one who had taken the

initiative to ask a question was the eldest son's second son.

But what was funny was that Qin Yan's youngest fifth son was only five or six years old, a little child who could only suck his thumb.

When Han Li thought about that sixteen or seventeen year-old youth being forced to call this child with a drippy nose "Fifth Uncle", he felt that it was quite comical.

As for Qin Yan's wives, apart from the third wife he had met earlier in the morning, there was another forty year-old or so second wife, as well as seven or eight relatively young concubines.

Qin Yan's first wife was not in the hall; at the moment, it was said that she was praying to Buddha and abstaining from eating meat. She would no longer come out to see anyone.

Apart from these people, there were two forty year-old or so males; naturally, they were Qin Yan's second and third younger brothers.

They were each responsible for a portion of the Qin Clan's business and could be considered the more important members of the Qin Clan. Of course, they likewise had a few sons and daughters in the room, but Han Li only memorized these people's names, too lazy to pay them any further attention.

After all, the energy he possessed as one person was limited; he

could only focus on protecting the people Qin Yan introduced in this room.

“Yi! Where is Young Madam Biao?”

When Qin Yan introduced all the people inside the room once, he suddenly discovered that they were missing a person; he couldn't help but ask this to his third wife sitting beside him.

“Lord, Young Miss Biao felt that as a widow, it would not be too appropriate for her to meet any outsiders, and thus she didn't come! Should I go and call for her?” the third wife softly asked. A hesitant expression appeared on her face.

“Oh.” Qin Yan thought for a moment before continuing, “Don't worry about it, Martial Nephew Han is not an outsider; it's best if she comes and sees him!”

“Yes, my lord!”

“Little Lian, go quickly and call for the Young Miss Biao; tell her that the lord asked for her to come!”

The third wife indifferently commanded a young maid standing behind her.

“Yes, Madam.” This little maidservant who previously guided Han Li immediately and quickly ran out through a side door with small steps.

At this time, Qin Yan turned his head around and said in a low voice to Han Li:

“There’s one more person who didn’t come, a young woman whom my first wife saved seven or eight years ago while she was visiting her parents.”

“This woman is extremely pitiful. Not only did she lose her memory because she hit her head, her body was covered with wounds. My wife’s character is pretty good, so after treating her and seeing that the girl had no place to go, she had one of her brothers take her in as an adopted daughter, at least providing her with some shelter!”

“However, this woman truly is unlucky. Although she was married to a groom picked by her adoptive father, she was only married for three days before her spouse actually slipped and fell into a river because he was too drunk. It’s reasonable to say that such a young woman would naturally choose to remarry, but this woman actually has the temperament to die chaste and decided to live as a widow for the husband whom she only lived for three days with. This is a hot topic around here, but it has given my wife’s clan a great amount of face!”

“Afterwards, her adoptive father passed away due to sickness. My wife, seeing that the truly pitiful young lady was watching over an empty house all alone, decided to bring her over here to accompany her. In passing, she would also ease this woman’s anxiety!”

As Qin Yan spoke, he sighed incessantly!

Chapter 282: Transformation

When Han Li heard Qin Yan's words, although he appeared shocked, he rather disapproved. He felt that most of the time, these pitiful women were led astray by tales of noble women who didn't remarry.

When the young masters within the hall heard that Young Madam Biao was coming, they all incessantly whispered with happy expressions as anticipation appeared in their eyes. This surprised Han Li, but he soon came to the realization that this Young Madam Biao must be a beauty as delicate as a flower and as refined as jade.

Just as Han Li thought this, a young maid and a young woman dressed in white arrived at the guest hall.

Although this woman had beautiful long and light eyebrows and seemed extremely gentle and quiet, she also emitted an indescribable fiery charm from head to toe, giving her a lovely and emotionally stirring bearing. When a majority of men looked at her, they all felt an urge to hold her in their embrace and show tender love for her.

As immature and inexperienced youngsters, they continuously gave her fierce gazes with wide eyes.

It seemed that this Young Madam Biao had been the target of the Qin Clan young masters for quite some time!

However, when Han Li clearly saw this woman's appearance, shock flashed through his eyes. The foolish and dull expression on his face suddenly disappeared. Fortunately, Han Li was able to suppress his heart a moment later and restored his original appearance.

Because this transformation happened in less than a second and everyone in the hall was gazing at the young woman, his secret hadn't been revealed.

At this moment, Han Li's heart resembled constantly broiling storm.

The appearance of "Young Madam Biao" had greatly changed from before, and the young woman's grace had slightly changed as well. However, from the intelligence flowing through her eyes and her delicate oval face, Han Li recognized this "Young Madam Biao" with just a single look. She was one of the few faces he had seen at the Mo Estate several years ago, the graceful young woman who lived to research the art of healing, Mo Fengwu.

When Mo Fengwu entered the room, everyone saw her face slightly redden, and she lowered her head as she walked. Naturally, she did not see Han Li, who sat next to Qin Yan.

When Qin Yan saw his juniors acting unbecoming of themselves, he grew extremely annoyed!

Cough, cough.

His face tightened, and after coughing several times more, the young men who were absorbed in Mo Fengwu's beauty woke up and retracted their gazes one after another, assuming the appearance of upright gentlemen. They feared they had angered their clan master!

"Ping'er! Sit next to your aunt." The third wife thought to hurriedly call out, having Mo Fengwu sit at her side.

"Thank you, Third Aunt!"

Mo Fengwu gently said a word of thanks and neatly walked to the side of the third wife, sitting down upright.

"Ping'er, don't stay in your room all the time. It's bad for living people. It's much better to walk around outside!"

It was obvious Qin Yan found Mo Fengwu very pitiful as his tone was very mild.

"Many thanks to Uncle. Ping'er understands!" Mo Fengwu docilely replied without raising her head.

"Sigh!"

When Qin Yan saw this, he softly sighed.

Although this adopted daughter obediently responded every

time, once she returned, she would continue as always. Qin Yan was helpless. Then he thought to continue on with proper business and introduced Han Li to Mo Fengwu, “Ping’er, I’ve had you come here to introduce you to someone! This is Han Li, my dear nephew Han. He is the descendant of a Senior who has done our family a great kindness. Come take a look at him! In the future, make sure to get along with this Elder Brother of yours!”

Han Li was fully focused on Mo Fengwu’s movements. When this woman heard the words “Han Li”, her body slightly trembled, and her heart immediately beat faster.

After a long while, Mo Fengwu slowly raised her head, revealing her beautiful face. At this moment, that the emotionally touching serenity of her beauty and her almond lips touched together, leaving a faint reply, “Hello Dear Brother Han!”

It seemed as if Mo Fengwu truly did not remember Han Li.

After hearing her pay her respects to Han Li, it seemed as if he were stunned by her lovely appearance. He finally said “Hello dear sister” with much difficulty.

This caused the young spectators to the side to smile and laugh without end.

Qin Yan coldly swept his eyes past them, and it immediately grew quiet. Han Li then dimwittedly scratched his head and appeared at a loss of what to do.

The following matters were much more simple.

Qin Yan coldly proclaimed to the many people of his household that Han Li would be staying at the Qin Residence for some time. During this time, he would assume the role of a young master of the Qin Residence, making it forbidden for others to slight him, else there would be heavy punishment.

When those words were spoken, those of Qin Residence started looking at Han Li with a peculiar gaze. At this moment, it wasn't just the third wife who was guessing at Han Li's and Qin Yan's true relationship.

.....

At night, Han Li was lying down on his room's bed without sleeping. He was looking at the roof, as if he were worried about something.

Pengpeng! The sound of two light knocks came from outside the room. Han Li, who hadn't fallen asleep, slightly raised the corner of his mouth, revealing a mysterious smile.

Han Li then calmly stood up and opened the room door.

Outside the room stood a woman concealed by a cloak.

When this woman saw Han Li open the door, she immediately dropped her hood, revealing her lovable appearance. This was Mo

Fengwu, who had pretended to not recognize Han Li earlier that day.

When Han Li saw this, he silently moved his body to the side. Mo Fengwu then walked in without the slightest hesitation.

Han Li stood at the door and released his spiritual sense. He didn't discover anybody within the vicinity. It seemed that Mo Fengwu had been careful when she came here.

He softly closed the door and turned his head. He saw Mo Fengwu had silently undone her cloak, revealing her ample and alluring dainty body. Then with no trace of politeness, she sat on the side of the bed, expressionlessly looking at Han Li.

Han Li sighed!

Apart from her appearance, he truly found it difficult to draw a connection between this cold and detached woman and his impression of that gentle young woman who loved the healing. Her experiences these past many years had transformed her into a greatly unfamiliar person.

“Should I address you as Junior Martial Brother Han or Dear Brother Han?” A displeased expression flashed through her eyes as she coarsely asked this.

“Call me Han Li, Young Lady Fengwu!” Han Li leisurely said as he restrained his thoughts.

After hearing Han Li's words, Mo Fengwu's face flashed with disappointment. But soon after, she said with a relaxed appearance, "I don't know why Young Master Han, an Immortal cultivator, arrived here at the Qin Residence, and I also don't care to know these secrets! I came here only to ask young master to kill one of Fengwu's foes out of respect for your relationship with my father as your master."

When she said this, Mo Fengwu was incapable of maintaining her cold and detached appearance. She nervously looked at Han Li, fearing that Han Li would refuse.

Han Li's expression had remained the same all along, but he did not immediately decline. Instead he picked up a pot of fragrant tea that had finished steeping and silently poured Mo Fengwu a cup. Then he slowly said a few words that shocked the woman.

"Could it be the person you want me to kill is the Sect Master of the Rainbow Sect?" After Han Li took a seat across from Mo Fengwu and unhurriedly said this, he took a neutral glance at her shocked, beautiful appearance.

Mo Fengwu's shock quickly faded away.

She look at Han Li with a strange gaze several times; after a long while, she bitterly said, "It seems Junior Martial Brother Han already knew of this matter with the Mo Estate. It's true that nothing can be concealed from you Immortal cultivators!"

Although Mo Fengwu said these words softly, Han Li heard a trace of hidden resentment within them. Furthermore, this resentment was unexpectedly directed toward him!

After a moment of consideration, Han Li understood why she was like this.

Afterwards, he lightly chuckled and explained, “It seems that Young Lady Fengwu has misunderstood! Regardless of how this one says it, he does have a friendship with the Mo Estate. If I had truly known the Mo Estate was experiencing a catastrophe, at the very least, I would have let the Martial Mothers escape unscathed and allow them to live the rest of their years in peace. As for other matters, it would be hard to say.” As Han Li explained, he became extremely sincere.

He was not fearful of Mo Fengwu holding grudges against him. However, Han Li couldn’t unload the cause of this obscure injustice onto himself.

When Mo Fengwu heard Han Li’s words, she only said “Oh.” Her face resumed her cold and detached appearance. Han Li didn’t know whether this woman had truly believed his explanation just now.

When Han Li saw this, he shook his head, and after a moment of hesitation, he could only inform her of the truth. Originally because of the truth’s connection with the world of Immortal cultivators, he had been reluctant to tell her.

“In truth, this matter with the Mo Estate’s misfortune was told me to by the girl Caihuan. She is currently together with Fourth Martial Mother.”

“What? You’re saying that Caihuan and Fourth Mother are still alive?!” After Mo Fengwu heard this, she grew excited and found it hard to believe. Two red blushes appeared on her pure white face from the excitement.

“Of course they’re alive. To say they are currently living at an exceptionally concealed location wouldn’t be wrong!” Han Li softly added.

In truth, after he escaped Yan Ling Castle, he made some inquiries about the circumstances of the mortals at Yan Ling Castle after the Yan Clan left.

In the end, the castle had become deserted, so the mortals took advantage of this, leaving Yan Lin Castle. Afterwards, all traces of that mother and daughter vanished.

TL: The Mo’s Fearsome Flood Dragon Association had two direct competitors: the Hegemon’s Villa and the Rainbow Sect. Han Li was previously sent to kill the Hegemon’s Villa Sect Master for an antidote to Dr. Mo’s poison before he went to the Great South Trade Meet.

Chapter 283: Old Affection

Han Li felt that if he told Mo Fengwu that Mo Caihuan and her mother had disappeared, he would be telling her far too much.

So long as Mo Fengwu knew that her family still lived in this world, that was enough! Whether or not this girl would be able to meet with Mo Caihuan and her mother depended on the world.

Han Li then briefly recounted the events of how he came across Mo Caihuan, causing Fengwu to nearly cry tears of joy.

Mo Fengwu clearly understood that because of Han Li's identity as an Immortal cultivator, he didn't need to fabricate such lies to deceive such a weak girl as herself. The reason why the other party was being so polite to her was most likely due to that fated meeting with him so many years ago.

Thus, Mo Fengwu brought her hands together in joy and raised them to her chest, silently praying for a moment before returning to her normal state.

However, her expression toward Han Li was clearly no longer as cold as before.

She clearly realized that in all likelihood, were it not for Han Li's assistance at Yan Ling Castle, Lady Yan and her daughter would still be in a predicament!

“Many thanks to Young Master Han telling me about the whereabouts of Caihuan and fourth mother.” After Mo Caihuan calmed down, she slowly gave her thanks.

But without waiting for Han Li to reply, she said, “Although my younger sister and her mother are alright, the whereabouts of my eldest sister and my other mothers are unknown. They’ve most likely fallen to some evil scheme. Fengwu cannot help but want to avenge them! However, Fengwu lacks the strength. Can Junior Martial Brother Han help me?”

Mo Fengwu’s words revealed a feeble appearance. A layer of fog covered her eyes in an instant, as if she were about to sob from grief.

When Han Li saw this, he stoked his nose and felt a headache!

He originally thought that if she knew of Mo Caihuan and her mother’s whereabouts, she wouldn’t be so anxious to take revenge. But he didn’t think that Mo Fengwu, whom he hadn’t seen for so many years, would become so strongly attached to this matter!

To tell the truth, killing a Qi Condensation cultivator would be far easier than killing a mortal with status for no reason.

Han Li learned the reason why after he entered Yellow Maple Valley. It turned out that all the many provinces of the State of Yue had been clearly divided between several large clans and the Seven Great Sects.

So long as a powerhouse of great influence had existed for some time within a province, cultivators would secretly pay some attention to them. Some would even be provided assistance from cultivators

Originally, the Lan Province's Mo Estate and the Hegemon's Villa were new and developing powers. Thus, they weren't contacted by cultivators. Else, when Han Li was sent to kill the Hegemon's Villa's Ouyang Feitian, how could he have gotten away so easily without being investigated?

However, the Rainbow Sect was different.

That sect had been established more than a hundred years ago and was regarded to be ancient. Thus, the Spirit Beast Mountain of the Seven Great Sects, the controller of the Lan Province, tacitly approved of them. The shadow of Spirit Beast Mountain was most likely looming behind them. As a result, when the Mo Estate fought against them, they suffered great defeat.

As a disciple of Yellow Maple Valley, he couldn't kill a major mortal leader supported by another sect for no cause or reason; otherwise, he wouldn't be able to explain himself.

However, with the recent invasion of the State of Yue by the Devil Dao, the secular world had suffered damage. This gave him a good opportunity to act during this time of crisis. With just a bit of carefulness, he shouldn't have any problems.

As Han Li thought this, he didn't expose any emotions. Instead,

he stood up and paced back and forth within the room.

After another moment of consideration, he gazed at Mo Fengwu's charming face and calmly said, "Young Lady Fengwu, normally I wouldn't be able to agree to this request since doing so would bring about great problems for me! But the recent circumstances in the cultivation world are quite peculiar. An opportunity might actually arrive. Let's do it like this! If there's an opportunity in the future, I will attempt to eliminate the Rainbow Sect's master. But if it is truly impossible, I hope Young Lady Fengwu will extinguish her thoughts for revenge!"

When Mo Fengwu heard Han Li's words, she immediately began crying tears of joy. Seeing her bright and beautiful crying beauty caused Han Li to become despondent for a moment.

The year he first saw Mo Fengwu, he was quite moved by that sweet-tempered second young madam of the Mo Estate. To this day, that memory still gave him a kind and warm pleasant feeling, causing him to recall it fondly!

That was the first time he felt feelings of romantic passion!

This small promise was none other than a show of affection!

Despite this thought, his appearance was the same as always. He planned to bury this emotion deeply in his heart and no longer speak of it again.

From Han Li's agreement, Mo Fengwu eventually looked over to him with happiness.

Her face was filled with appreciation. She didn't say anything further and walked toward Han Li. Suddenly, she pressed her soft and fragrant lips lightly against his face. Then, with a bashful and slightly perplexed expression, she said, "With Junior Martial Brother Han's promise, even if you can't kill that person, Fengwu cannot thank you enough!"

After saying this, the young woman silently donned her cloak and hurriedly left his room.

Han Li touched the spot on his face where he had been kissed with an odd expression. Not long after, he held his chin with a single hand and sunk into deep thought for a very long time.

.....

At daybreak on the second day, Han Li woke up from Qi refining meditation and thought of the events that happened last night. He couldn't help but inwardly sigh. If Mo Fengwu also possessed spiritual roots, he would definitely introduce her to Yellow Maple Valley and cultivate the Great Dao as her Dao Companion.

With this thought, Han Li washed his face and walked out of the room.

He intended to become familiar with the layout of the Qin

Residence and then further consider his other matters.

But he didn't think that just as he walked out, he would discover the smiling Qin Ping in the courtyard.

Without waiting for Han Li's astonished inquiries, he quickly stepped forward and explained, "This one was ordered by Lord Qin to serve as Young Master's personal servant for the time being. In the future, if Young Master Han requires any errands to be done, do not hesitate to tell me."

As Qin Ping spoke to Han Li, his expression was respectful and excited.

His thoughts were quite simple. Although this Young Master Han came from a small region and people wouldn't see him as very bright, this person was at the center of the lord's eye and held the lord's complete favor.

Besides, if he served this Young Master well, perhaps he might also invite the lord's favor!

As Qin Ping thought this and made his own selfish calculations, he constantly looked down at this young country bumpkin master with disdain, especially when he first heard he was to be his servant!

Qin Ping had already been told by a madam's maid that this was most likely to be the lord's illegitimate child. So long as the lord

lived, who would dare to treat this young master unfairly? Also, how long he would follow Young Master Han was a matter that would depend on how the tides changed.

This would raise his position far faster than running errands for the third madam!

Han Li naturally didn't know of this person's true thoughts, instead feeling only that Qin Ping conducted himself in accordance to Qin Yan's wishes. He knew he was unfamiliar toward Yuejing and the Qin Residence, so having this person immediately come to guide him was quite timely!

Just as Han Li thought this, he couldn't help but reveal a smile. Then he bluntly said to Qin Ping, "I haven't yet seen a large portion of these buildings, so I want to take a look around. How about you accompany me?"

"Yes, Young Master!"

Given his first assignment, Qin Ping enthusiastically answered.

As such, Han Li had Qin Ping lead the way and strolled around the huge Qin Residence.

Although he spoke of the women's quarters, it wasn't suitable for Han Li to see them up close. Even so, when people saw them pointing it out from a distance, they didn't dare to say any gossip. After all, Qin Yan's previous words affected the entire Qin

Residence.

“This is the Second Master Fugui’s courtyard. Apart from the second Lord, his two youngest sons also live there. Neighboring that...”

Qin Ping guided Han Li quite well. Unbeknownst to him, Han Li secretly committed every name that Qin Ping told Han Li as well as where each master lived.

But when he spoke of “Young Madam Biao” Mo Fengwu’s residence, Han Li’s mind stirred. He paused and looked at it for quite a long time before turning his head away.

Not a long time after, Han Li finished looking through the Qin Residence once through, but somehow it seemed that Han Li was not yet content.

In the end, he bluntly had Qin Ping bring him out of the Qin Residence and out to a lively place in Yuejing. As they wandered randomly, Qin Ping continued to give him explanations.

...

The entire morning passed by as they walked through a few scenic spots in Yuejing.

Qin Ping’s originally enthusiastic expression had long disappeared. At this moment, he was limping behind Han Li with a

bitter face.

Who would've thought that even after walking for so many hours without the slightest amount of rest, he would still be forced to continue to comment and explain without end? Anybody would feel similarly frustrated in this situation.

Qin Ping even went as far as to suspect whether or not he had chosen the wrong master.

Chapter 284: Whispered Discussion

Although Qin Ping was a servant within the Qin Residence, he would normally call a carriage whenever he went outside. He had never traveled so far on foot as he had today.

This tormented him by no small amount!

Qin Ping could feel his two heels faintly bruising, and his feet felt like they were pincushions being pricked. Not to mention that his throat had long become hoarse from talking too much.

However, when he saw his own new master was greatly interested by a small porcelain store and continued on to look in every direction, he could only grit his teeth and reluctantly follow.

After all, he couldn't tell his master that he was tired. How could a servant such as he dare to complain!

“I'm a bit hungry. Do you know a place where we can eat lunch?”

Han Li's unbelievably honest words stirred Qin Ping's heart, and he repeatedly agreed after arriving at Han Li's side. Then he made an extremely polite suggestion and immediately led the way to a small restaurant not too far away, praising the restaurant's exquisite signature dishes.

Han Li found this humorous but still wore an “I'll let you decide” expression. Qin Ping then went in first, entering the two-story

restaurant.

The first floor only had commoners eating simple dishes. The second floor, however, was where those of status went to eat.

Qin Ping naturally did not have Han Li eat on the first floor, although it seemed that his master had some intention to.

There weren't many guests on the second floor, only three to four groups of people.

At one of the tables, there were actually five truly notable figures, three men and two women.

When Han Li walked onto this floor he naturally looked at this group of people with surprise. This was because those five were actually Qi Condensation cultivators of the tenth layer or higher; the appearance of cultivators in a mortal establishment was quite unusual.

'Could they be from the Six Devil Dao Sects?' Han Li first thought.

Han Li immediately restrained the Spiritual Qi in his body and used the "Drawing Qi Technique" that he learned after achieving Foundation Establishment, withdrawing all of his Spiritual Qi into his body. As such, in the eyes of those with far lower cultivation, they wouldn't be able to tell the difference between Han Li and just another mortal.

“Young Master, please sit over here!”

Qin Ping dragged Han Li over to a table by the window with great difficulty as his feet ached. Then he used his sleeves to wipe down the wooden chair before inviting Han Li to sit down with a full smile.

Han Li revealed embarrassment and promptly called Qin Ping to sit down as well.

This time, Qin Ping wasn't too polite and, after declining a few times, he sincerely sat down.

His feet were truly in pain, but he was unable to break away from his status as a servant. Fortunately, this Young Master Han who just entered the capital wasn't particularly attentive to formal etiquette.

Having seen two people sit down, a waiter swiftly walked toward them and humbly asked, “What would these two guests like? This restaurant has many signature dishes that are quite renowned.”

“I want a table of all your best dishes, and bring your signature dishes as well. Also, use your very best ingredients. My Young Master is a Young Master of the Qin Residence!” Qin Ping knew that Han Li certainly didn't know how to order food and took the matter into his own hands, ordering on Han Li's behalf. After he mentioned the “Qin Residence”, the servant's expression became far more lively.

Sure enough, the reputation of the Qin Residence was quite useful. After the waiter heard this, he immediately nodded his head, bowed, and even said a few words of flattery. He then rushed back after taking their orders.

However, Han Li wasn't interested in flaunting his power to some servant. He was entirely focused on the cultivators sitting not that far from him.

But what baffled him was that was that the thirty year-old blue-clothed man seemed familiar, as if he had seen him before.

Han Li thought for a moment, but nothing came to mind. He absolutely wasn't someone he was very familiar with.

The men, including the blue-clothed man whom Han Li found familiar, all drank a cup of alcohol with a face of worry. The two beautiful women were simply staring at their cups of alcohol, not even moving their chopsticks. It seemed they didn't have an appetite.

From their appearances, they encountered no small amount of hardships. They truly didn't seem likely to be Devil Dao cultivators infiltrating the State of Yue.

The blue-clothed man seemed to be the youngest of the group apart from a woman who appeared several years younger.

“Young Master, the food has arrived. Please eat first!” At this moment, Han Li heard Qin Yan’s respectful words from the side.

The servant had already neatly and nimbly arranged the dishes onto the table!

“Hehe, let us eat together!” Han Li smiled with slight embarrassment and opened his mouth, revealing his pure white teeth.

At this moment, Han Li started to eat without restraint and looked to be completely focused on chewing. But in truth, he was stealthily releasing his spiritual sense, closely paying attention to the several cultivators nearby.

When Qin Ping saw Han Li start to eat, he naturally moved his chopsticks about. At that moment, the eldest cultivator among them, an old man with a dark face, stopped drinking and suddenly released an invisible soundproof barrier around them. Then he said, “Everyone, eat. Since our lives have fallen to the hands of others, we, companions from Mist Mountain, can only walk one step at a time! Regardless of how it is said, not having our souls scattered is far better than what happened to other cultivators.”

Although the soundproof barrier was in effect and the dark-faced old man’s voice wasn’t loud, Han Li could clearly hear it. Soundproof magic techniques used by Qi Refining cultivators were ineffective against Han Li’s astonishing spiritual sense.

However, the old man's words caused Han Li to know something

was amiss; he could hear there was something being hidden from those words.

Perhaps due to the dark-faced old man's words, the two women silently ate some food.

However, they still seemed absent minded. It was most likely they tasted nothing!

“Eldest Brother, will we truly be manipulated by them from now on? This truly won't do. We can secretly tell the seven sects. Surely they will deal with them!” After the blue-clothed man took two heavy drinks, he said this with a fierce complexion.

The dark-faced old man sighed. “Fourth Brother! The matter isn't so simple.” He lightly shook his head and revealed a sense of helplessness.

Hearing the old man's words, the youngest white-clothed woman couldn't help but ask, “Eldest Brother, why can't we? Could it be those from the seven sects don't want to kill villains? In the State of Yue, at least several hundred have died by their hands to preserve the Dao.”

When the white-clothed woman said this, her face displayed unwillingness.

When the middle-aged man and woman saw the fierce reply, they silently looked at each other with a bitter smile. It seemed these

two clearly understood what the dark-faced old man had misgivings about.

When Han Li heard this, he was somewhat amazed. He felt that he had just faintly grasped onto something immensely huge.

However, he maintained his cover by eating several more dishes, causing Qin Ping to praise Han Li's great appetite.

Han Li smiled with a slight blush as if he realized his actions were improper and slowed down the speed at which he was eating.

At this moment, the dark-faced old man sighed and started to give the blue-clothed man and the white -clothed woman an explanation.

“In truth, calling the seven sects for help is simply useless!”

“First of all, us rogue cultivators clearly understand the current circumstances of the seven sects. All of their manpower is focused on stopping the invasion of the Devil Dao, so how could they divert manpower to help us rogue cultivators? They even face against Foundation Establishment cultivators. If the seven sects sent ordinary cultivators, they would fundamentally be unable to act. Otherwise, how else would the Devil Dao have captured us so easily!”

“Secondly, even if the seven sects were truly worried about preserving the Dao and they had actually sent forth men to

eliminate our assailants, don't forget that they were wearing masks. We don't know anything about their appearance. Furthermore, they surprised us at an abandoned temple they happened to find, so any sort of help wouldn't have arrived on time. We simply have no means to act against them! Not to mention they put some sort of strange restriction on our bodies. If we don't follow their orders on time, it's likely we will be killed immediately! Also, is it certain that those from the seven sects will be able to remove our restrictions? Since they dared to let us leave so easily, they probably designed these restrictions themselves. They certainly aren't so easily destroyed!"

As the dark-faced old man said this, the more wrinkled his brow became. It seemed he spoke with despair.

"Then we can truly only side with the villains and help them trap other cultivators?" The white-clothed woman's complexion greatly paled. She was clearly unwilling to do this.

"Fifth Sister! It is as Eldest Brother has said. Right now, we can only walk one step at a time! Fortunately, we have some time before we'll be forced to act. During that time, hopefully us five friends from Mist Mountain will find a way to disobey them and escape!" The tall and thin forty year-old man spoke, consoling her.

But these several people all knew that those words were flowery lies meant to deceive themselves! They hadn't been able to think of anything plausible these past few days. Would likely was it that they'd find a way after a few months?

With that said, these people became silent. Worry bubbled forth

in their hearts.

Chapter 285: Disregard And Rumors

After Han Li heard all of this, he understood nearly everything.

What these people unexpectedly said had to do with the disappearance of cultivators in the State of Yue during the past recent years.

These several people had probably been captured by the masterminds behind the plot and then let go after being threatened. But from hearing their tone of voice, they were already being controlled and forced to harm others.

All sorts of thoughts quickly churned through Han Li's mind, but after a short moment, he decided that this matter was better left untouched.

After all, these people were the reason behind the disappearance of many cultivators. Even so, they had been freely acting to this day but still remained unexposed. This by itself explained how exceptionally cunning they were, and how truly out of the ordinary these people must be.

Furthermore, since they could control Foundation Establishment cultivators, they might have Core Formation cultivators behind them!

He himself was but a mere lone Foundation Establishment cultivator. During such troubled times, it would be better to not invite disaster upon himself.

With this decision in mind, Han Li immediately withdrew his spiritual sense and no longer paid attention to this group of cultivators.

Although this group of people was unfortunate and pitiful, he was not one to show kindness for no reason. He also didn't want to brave this huge danger that had nothing to do with him.

He could only hope they would find better fortune!

Furthermore, the current seven sects were as the dark-faced man had deduced. The entirety of their power was focused on repelling the Devil Dao. They basically had no men to spare. Even if Han Li helped inform them of this matter, they most likely wouldn't care for something unrelated to themselves.

Han Li could only think this with disregard.

Since he didn't need to split his attention to hear the whispered conversation, Han Li became focused on eating. From time to time, he would pretend to be curious, pointing to a few novel things out the window and asking Qin Ping about them.

Naturally, Qin Ping continued to give Han Li full and detailed explanations. While he did so, most of the table's food entered Han Li's stomach, causing Qin Ping to click his tongue. He inwardly thought that this young master not only had vigorous energy but also a voracious appetite!

At this moment, the cultivators sitting on the table climbed down to the lower floor. Han Li clearly saw them leave with dejected spirits. It seemed that they hadn't thought of a good solution within this short span of time.

Seeing this scene, Han Li had Qin Ping settle the bill after eating several more mouthfuls of food.

However, Qin Ping happily smiled. He took out a small Qin Residence medallion and arrogantly walked to the first floor.

Not long after, he went back up and made a report to Han Li, "Young Master, I showered them the pocket medallion. I told the shopkeeper to go to our Residence at the end of the month to settle the bill. As such, we don't have to bring silver with us to pay our bill. Every month, the young masters of the Qin Residence are given several hundred taels of silver as spending money. I have already logged the meal bill under the Young Master's name."

When Han Li heard this he was slightly surprised. Once again he felt the luxury of the Qin Residence!

However, a blank expression appeared on his face as he carelessly nodded his head several times. Then he brought Qin Ping to the lower floor.

In the afternoon, Han Li didn't think to continue on foot. Having learned from previous pain, Qin Ping suggested calling for a carriage. They then made a trip to several significant locations in

Yuejing.

Although they couldn't visit many of the sites, Han Li finally felt that he had a general idea on the topography and street layout. It was unlikely that the Qin Residence would've met their doom as Han Li was having a look in the capital city.

Night came. Han Li returned to the Qin Residence, fully satisfied.

At this moment, the gatekeeper Qin Gui hastily rushed out of the gatehouse to greatly ingratiate himself to Han Li without even waiting for him to step off the carriage.

He was afraid that this newly appeared Young Master Han would bear a grudge about yesterday's matter for having not respected him. He needed to have Han Li's impression of him improve!

But how could Han Li be bothered to remember such a thing from yesterday when he had other things to worry about? He had long forgotten about the matter!

At this moment, his mind was filled with thoughts of how he could protect the Qin Residence. It was truly no good. He had to protect Qin Yan's life at the very least, else he would have to explain himself to Li Huayuan.

With this thought, Han Li came to a decision and entered the Qin Residence with ease.

At night, Han Li directly went to find his Uncle Qin while avoiding all others.

After a moment of detailed discussion within the secret room, Han Li returned in high spirits.

On the next day, those related to Qin Yan had suddenly discovered that an unfamiliar youth had appeared at his side. Furthermore, he seemed completely unsophisticated, unlike anyone native to Yuejing.

With great enthusiasm, Qin Yan introduced this youth to all familiar with him as a descendant of a senior from his own clan. His close friends then said they would properly support Han Li in the future and other such things!

Qin Yan's friends weren't officials or nobles but rather hugely wealthy and influential merchants.

Although they found it quite baffling that a youth was following Qin Yan so closely, after they made a few inquiries about Han Li, those wily old foxes naturally looked upon Han Li as kind and friendly seniors.

Han Li also made contact with the upper echelon of Yuejing eventually.

.....

In the blink of an eye, two months had passed by!

Han Li appeared to have truly become a young master of the Qin Residence. Not only was his treatment the same as Qin Yan's own descendants, but up until this day, regardless if it was business, social niceties, or visiting a guest in his residence, Clan Lord Qin always brought Han Li along at his side without exception. It appeared as if he wanted to cultivate Han Li with great effort.

As such, the rumors that Han Li was Clan Lord Qin's illegitimate child quickly spread outside of the Qin Residence. Even aristocratic families acquainted with the Qin Residence had long heard of these rumors!

However, Qin Yan completely ignored these rumors and left them to the imagination, causing everyone to tacitly agree and further solidifying the rumor as truth!

As a result, the younger generation of the Qin Clan became impatient. It was unknown whether it was incited by the senior generation, but with clever pettiness and overconfidence, they unexpectedly started to make indirect inquiries on the validity of these rumors.

However, Han Li continued to play the unwitting fool, so naturally those people left without any results.

As time passed, the people of the Qin Residence tacitly understood that Han Li was a young master of the Qin Residence and believed Han Li to be greatly loved by Qin Yan. However, they

thought it was a result making up for guilt towards Han Li!

Although several of the young masters and madams of the Qin Clan that had originally been doted on by Qin Yan felt greatly unsatisfied from this, under the great pressure of their lord grandfather, they didn't dare to make any obvious action against Han Li. They could only pinch their nose and resist for the time being.

However, they cursed Han Li behind his back on more than one occasion, calling him a b@stard country bumpkin and the like.

However, these people did not know that at night, when Han Li was refining Qi and cultivating in his room, he would periodically envelope the entire Qin Residence with his spiritual sense. Although he wasn't able to sustain it for very long, it was more than enough to discover quite a few secrets!

Han Li clearly heard these people's indignant words.

Although Han Li wouldn't teach these inexperienced and naive children a lesson, their seniors, who were secretly polishing plans to disgrace him, left Han Li somewhat speechless.

He wouldn't bother with these mortals, but if the Devil Dao were to suddenly strike, these people would naturally be the last to be protected. That would be Han Li's minor retaliation!

One day, Qin Yan was unexpectedly invited to a banquet by an

extraordinarily important person, a prince!

It was said that this prince's favored concubine had recovered from great illness, so he was arranging a great banquet in celebration.

Although the Qin Clan weren't the richest merchants in Yuejing, their power and influence absolutely were in the top three, so they would naturally be given an invitation card.

Furthermore, it wasn't just Qin Yan who was invited. The invitation mentioned that the prince wished to make friends with the young masters and "talented women" of the Qin Clan. It is said that the Young Prince had particularly wanted them to go!

With no better choice, Qin Yan could only go together with his juniors.

The juniors who learned of this news immediately rejoiced with happiness on the spot!

However, ever since Qin Yan heard that the Qin Clan was in the middle of a crisis, he naturally couldn't allow his juniors to fool around outside during this time.

If the Devil Dao were actually carefully watching them as Han Li said, then they would be facing certain calamity!

Thus, within these last two months, Lord Qin had been using a

variety of excuses to forbid his juniors from leaving the premises. How could this not cause the lazy and spoiled Qin Clan young masters and madams from complaining endlessly?!

What angered them even more was that Han Li wasn't much different from them in age, yet he had permission to leave early and return late, to indulge in pleasure and forget about duty. This caused these people to loudly cry out with injustice.

Now that there was such an opportunity, these Qin Clan juniors were naturally in high spirits since they would all go together.

“Prince Xin”, the prince who invited them, was one of the younger brothers of the King of the State of Yue.

From what Qin Yan said, although he was a member of the royal family, he was very forthright and made many friends!

Not only did high-ranking officials, nobles, and greatly wealthy merchants all wish to meet him, even common butchers and strange Jiang Hu eccentrics were rather familiar with him.

Of course, in order to prevent arousing ill intentions, he didn't dare to closely associate with high ranking and greatly influential military officials and bureaucrats.

As such, the prince had a great reputation among the commoners of Yuejing. Furthermore, he had garnered quite a bit of praise.

When Han Li heard this, he had a general impression of this prince. As for the specifics, he would naturally need to lay his eyes on him first!

After all, although his surface reputation was quite good, such great characters were more often shady characters underneath!

Chapter 286: Prince's Residence

Prince Xin's Residence actually wasn't in the imperial city. Instead, it was constructed in the south district. After Han Li and company sat in a carriage for two hours, they eventually arrived at a certain street.

The architectural styles of the south region and the Qin Residence were clearly different. Most of the buildings here were constructed to standard and template.

How great an official's position was, meaning how high they were in that position, could be clearly told by the size and style of their residence.

All of the officials' residences were located at this district. The strict following of feudal rank and elevation strictly divided the officials. Nobody here dared to alter these buildings as they wished, else they would break a law and invite punishment.

As a relative of the King, Prince Xin possessed royal status, so naturally his residence was one of the best in the south district.

The mansion residence's area was larger than the Qin Residence by about a half. However, this was balanced by huge residential rooms.

When the carriage to Prince Xin's residence stopped, Han Li took a look at the mansion residence and immediately felt that the mortal world was thriving in wealth.

The residence's gate was over fifteen meters tall and over ten meters wide. Thickly wrapped with yellow copper, it was embedded with several tens of huge nails, appearing quite luxurious and imposing.

In addition, there were two ten-meter stone platforms to the sides of the gate, each with a fierce azure lion statue. They were each sparkingly polished through its entire body, so bright they were hard to look at.

But what awed people the most from Prince Xin's residence were the sixteen neatly armored palace guards standing on the steps outside the gate. Prince Xin had borrowed these guards from the imperial city barracks to prevent any mishap from happening.

The chief steward of Prince Xin's estate was a small old man. In the place of the host, Prince Xin, he was on the steps greeting every new guest with a smile across his face. He didn't dare to neglect even a single guest.

At this moment, several tens of carriages of various sizes had stopped in front of the residence's gate, occupying nearly all of the empty space in front of the mansion.

In front of the huge azure stone platforms, five or six guests who had yet to enter the residence were exchanging greetings. Their clothes were magnificent, their movements elegant; it seemed their status was not low.

Seeing this, Qin Yan straightened his clothes and over-cautiously stepped off the carriage.

After a diligent glance in every direction to ensure there were no cultivators nearby, Han Li left the carriage at ease.

As for the young masters and madams of the Qin Clan, they left the carriages as soon as they arrived. They stood in front of the mansion, talking cheerfully.

Han Li looked at the guests who were still in front of the steps and discovered that apart from the juniors of the Qin Clan, almost all the other guests had also brought along their children and other such youths.

“Could it be that the so-called Prince Xin deliberately sent all of these invitations to the Prince’s Residence as a pretense to deliberately gather youths to this place?” With this thought, Han Li felt there wasn’t any substantial evidence and took a glance at Qin Yan.

From his wrinkled brow, it seemed Qin Yan was also slightly surprised.

“Grandfather, we’re going in first! The young prince is waiting on us!”

A sixteen to seventeen year-old Qin Clan young master saw that his lord grandfather still hadn’t moved far from his carriage and

couldn't help but gather the courage to say these words under the encouragement of his siblings. He seemed afraid that Qin Yan would criticize him.

“Alright, I got it. Everyone can go in!”

Greatly going against these youngsters' expectations, Qin Yan nodded and happily agreed. This caused these youths to feel slightly overwhelmed by favor! They couldn't help but happily walk among their peers.

However, without waiting for Qin Yan to bring these people forward, the chief steward of the Prince's residence immediately spotted this group after dealing with another guest. He immediately took the initiative to welcome them with a large smile. Walking over to them, he said very cordially, “Sir Qin, you've arrived at last! My Lord Prince talked for several days about how you haven't come to visit for so long. Please enter as soon as possible! I'm sure the Prince will be very happy to see you, Sir Qin!”

“Hehe, recently, I haven't...”

This steward of the Prince's residence wasn't ordinary. With just a few eloquent words, he was able get everyone who heard him to smile and feel warm inside.

Qin Yan couldn't help but smile as he chatted with this chief steward with ease.

However, because there were still guests arriving at the prince's residence, the steward couldn't speak much longer with Qin Yan and brought them inside the residence. Then after a few modest words, he quickly went back to the residence's gate.

Although Han Li remained at Qin Yan's side, he remained silent. However, the moment when Han Li looked at the back of the chief steward, suspicion flashed through his eyes.

He didn't know why, but although Han Li definitely didn't feel any spiritual power fluctuating from the chief steward's body, Han Li suddenly felt his blood run cold when this man drew near, as if a fearsome demonic beast were approaching him. This caused Han Li to feel greatly uneasy!

Although Han Li did not know why he felt this, he had always fully trusted his senses. He immediately added this chief steward to the list of names he should be wary of.

"Honorable Nephew Han, let's go! I'll give you an introduction to a few old friends of mine!" When Qin Yan saw the chief steward depart, he said this toward Han Li with a smile.

This caused the several Qin Clan members standing next to Qin Yan to immediately grow sour. They all felt that this clan lord of theirs was far too biased.

However, Han Li only smiled to himself. He knew this was truly just an excuse Qin Yan came up with so that Han Li could stay by his side at all times.

They were then led to a large guest hall of Prince Xin's residence by Qin Yan.

There seemed to be over a hundred people in the hall. But although there seemed to be many guests, since people arrived in groups of two and three, the Qin Residence's party of eight was the same size as parties from three sects.

At this moment, Prince Xin had yet to appear in the hall. It seemed he wouldn't appear until all his guests were present.

Just as Qin Yan arrived at the entrance of the large hall, he was immediately cordially called out by a few familiar long time friends.

Qin Yan naturally saluted and replied to them all. But when he swept his eyes across the room, he said a few words of apology and walked over to a sickly old man accompanied by a young man and a young woman.

The man had an earnest face with thick eyebrows and large eyes. Although the woman's appearance wasn't outstanding, her large eyes were provocative, and she looked through the juniors at Qin Yan's side with no trace of politeness. Han Li was naturally among those she had swept her eyes over.

"Senior Brother Hua, I didn't think such a great medicine god as yourself would show up here! I would have thought that with your disposition, you would decline an invitation to such an occasion."

Qin Yan walked in front of the old man and sat down next to him with no trace of politeness, teasing him with a soft voice.

“Ke! I originally thought not to come, but the strange illness afflicting the prince’s concubine had been cured. This greatly piqued my curiosity, and I thought to see what expert doctor was able to perform such a miraculous feat!” The old man that Qin Yan familiarly addressed as ‘Senior Brother Hua’ softly replied with a faint smile.

“Oh! So it’s like that. So the rumor that Prince Xin had invited Senior Brother to treat his favorite concubine’s illness wasn’t just a rumor. Could it be that Senior Brother Hua’s healing arts weren’t enough to treat this illness?”

When Han Li saw Qin Yan’s great astonishment, he reasoned that the medicinal expertise of this old man should be very well known within Yuejing.

“Hehe, there are countless odd and fantastic illnesses in this world. I only gained my current reputation through pure luck! There are a few strange untreatable illnesses that are quite strange and difficult even with my medical expertise.” The old man smiled without seeming to mind. His view of the world seemed quite wide.

“But I still can’t believe it. There is actually another great doctor within Yuejing who has superior medicinal expertise?” Qin Yan shook his head. He seemed to hold much confidence in this old man’s healing arts.

But when Old Man Hua heard this, he faintly smiled and didn't speak any further. Then he pointed to the young man and woman at his side and said, "These two are Hua Nan and Hua Fang. You've seen them before. Come over and greet your Grandpa Qin!"

Old Man Hua was clearly viewed with much respect in these two's eyes. This pair agreed without the slightest hesitation and rushed over to salute and greet Qin Yan.

"Hehe, I didn't think that your grandson and granddaughter would suddenly grow so big since the moment I took my eyes off them so many years ago. I don't have anything good to give on hand. How about I give them these jade-embedded pendants as a welcoming gift!" As Qin Yan amiably said this, he felt around his body and took out a pair of flawless dark-green jade pendants. From a single look, one could tell these items were exceptionally valuable.

Although a strange expression of satisfaction flashed through the man's eyes, it quickly disappeared. The woman's face, however, was filled with joy, and she looked at the jade pendant with her fiery gaze.

"Don't hesitate. If you want them, then take them! Old Brother Qin is no stranger to our household!" When Old Man Hua saw this, he couldn't help but yell this with a smile.

When they heard this, the man and woman then dared to take the jade pendants that Qin Yan offered them. Their expressions

were quite happy.

“Apart from this one, I’ve already seen the other juniors several times already. Could it be the dear nephew who recently arrived at Yuejing?” The old man’s gaze then arrived at Han Li, sizing him up with great curiosity.

“That’s right. This is Han Li! He’s a descendant of my Senior.”

“Honorable Nephew Han! This is your Senior Uncle Hua, one of the two great medicine gods of Yuejing!” At this moment, Qin Yan then thought to introduce Han Li to this Senior Brother of his.

“Greetings to Senior Uncle Hua!” Han Li sincerely shouted to him.

“En, not bad, not bad!” Old Man Hua truly did not see anything that was outstanding about Han Li but he still spoke those words of praise.

But after a moment of thought, he remembered the rumors that were being spread about the youth. He hesitated for a moment before taking out a small white bottle with his wrinkled shriveled hands and offered it to Han Li.

“This is a Heart Protecting Pill that I meticulously refined! Although I don’t dare to say it will cure anything, common small illnesses and injuries will not be a problem. I will give this to Honorable Nephew Han to protect himself!”

When the words left the old man's mouth, Han Li immediately felt the envy and jealousy of the Qin Clan members behind him. Hua Nan and Hua Fang also revealed an expression of shock. The fame of this 'Heart Protecting Pill' was obviously greatly renown!

Chapter 287: Immortal Master

Han Li, as a Foundation Establishment cultivator, naturally wouldn't pay any attention to the medicinal pills of mortals. However, at this moment he definitely could not refuse the other person's goodwill; thus, he hesitated slightly and then received it with a bashful expression.

“Haha, Honorable Nephew Han! This Heart Protecting Pill was refined from Brother Hua's secret recipe; it isn't easily given to other people. Bringing it out today as a welcoming gift is being quite generous!” Qin Yan knew that Han Li wouldn't place much value on this item, but he still tried to say a few pleasant-sounding sentences for his good friend, hoping that the elder surnamed Hua would leave a good impression on Han Li.

The elder glanced at Qin Yan strangely a few times, not knowing what he and Han Li meant by saying these things in front of him.

He had only given such a precious medicinal pill to this youth in order to give Qin Yan some face! How could this extremely expensive pill otherwise be given to a stranger he had just met?

Just as the elder was hesitating about whether or not to ask, a sharp sound entered the room:

“Prince Xin has arrived!”

The servant's transmission immediately caused all of the clamor in the room to immediately subside; all of the people glanced

respectfully towards one of the side doors in the room.

Four maidservants first walked out of that door, standing on both sides of the head seat. Then, a man and a woman leisurely walked out.

The man was a forty year-old middle-aged man with a beard a few inches long. His square face and tiger-like eyes exuded a natural dignity and power. The other was a twenty-three year-old beautiful woman dressed in palace attire, her long dress trailing on the ground.

Seeing them walk in, all of the people sitting stood up and paid their respects to the male and female:

“Prince, Madam, greetings!”

Because this young woman was not Prince Xin’s original wife—she was only the concubine he most recently favored—these people could only call her ‘Madam’.

“Everyone is a good friend of this Prince; there’s no need to be so courteous. Come, everybody sit down.”

The way that Prince Xin spoke was very different from the impression that his face gave; it was very mild and straightforward, causing people’s favorable impression of him to rise! The beautiful concubine next to him naturally did not say anything. She simply stood there with a charming smile.

When the others heard these words, they all glanced at each other and smiled before sitting down.

“This Prince has a straightforward personality. If I have something to say, I will just say it to everyone!” Prince Xin spoke with a smile a moment after he sat down.

This sentence caused all the people facing him to begin to speak animatedly.

“Prince, if you have anything to say, please say it.”

“Yes, we have known Prince for many years now. Everyone knows the kind of attitude that the Prince has.”

.....

It was obvious that while there were some who spoke genuinely, there also others who spoke simply to flatter Prince Xin.

“The reason why I’ve invited everyone here today is because my beloved Qing’er’s sickness has been completely healed. This Prince’s joy dictates that I have some excitement and celebrate without restraint! In addition, this Prince has an enormous piece of good fortune that I want to give everyone. As for whether one has enough karma to obtain it, that will depend on individual luck.”

Prince Xin's words greatly exceeded everyone's expectations; they couldn't help but glance at each other.

Had the Prince gathered these people together solely to give them a piece of good fortune? This was too inconceivable!

“Hehe, Qing'er, look. Isn't everyone somewhat surprised just like this Prince had expected?” Not only was he not angry, Prince Xin actually gave a light laugh as he addressed the beautiful concubine by his side.

Hearing this, the beautiful woman called Qing'er chuckled gently and then responded with a lovely voice:

“Prince, perhaps anyone who heard these words would feel somewhat surprised! Everyone's response is only natural.”

Prince Xin laughed and stroked the short beard on his chin after hearing this woman's words. Then, he turned around and explained to the shocked gathering:

“There's no need for everyone to be puzzled! It's like this; Qing'er's strange illness was actually cured by a newly arrived expert. This expert can call the wind, summon the rain, breathe in fire, and spit out ice, a true and genuine Immortal. In addition, after curing Qing'er's illness, this living Immortal was actually able to immediately recognize that this Prince' young son has spiritual roots and can comprehend Immortal techniques. He thus accepted this Prince' inferior son as one of his disciples; not long from now, my son will embark on the path of cultivation.”

Having spoken up to this point, Prince Xin couldn't help but reveal a delighted expression on his face.

A potbellied person in the crowd immediately called out:

“Immortal cultivator, could this person be an Immortal cultivator from lore?”

This sentence instantly sparked a commotion amongst everyone in the large room.

Although cultivators were regarded as extremely mysterious by mortals in the secular world, all of the people sitting here were not ordinary individuals; naturally, they had all more or less heard of something along those lines. Some of their ancestors had even made deals with a few cultivators.

Even nowadays, there were always rumors circulating in the outside world that there were cultivators standing guard inside the imperial palace; this caused all the people to revere cultivators even more.

Now that the visitors in the room had actually heard that a living Immortal had come to Prince Xin's mansion, most of the people in the room instantly revealed extremely excited expressions.

Hearing this, Qin Yan was initially shocked in his heart, and he couldn't help turning his head to glance at Han Li.

However, the Han Li in his sight expressed nothing, and his face appeared to be normal.

Seeing this, Qin Yan did not dare to ask more questions; he could only turn his head back and listen to Prince Xin's next words.

At this time, Seeing that everyone had been stunned by his words, Prince Xin laughed and continued to speak:

“Naturally, this Prince has also asked this expert, and he confirmed that he is an Immortal cultivator. In addition, under this Prince's earnest urging, he is willing to stay a few more months here and teach this Prince ways to maintain good health. This Prince also discovered that this Immortal came specifically to accept some disciples with the karma to be an Immortal. Upon knowing this, this Prince immediately thought of all of you. Not only this, but I even asked all of you to summon all of your younger relatives because this Immortal master is willing to accept both female and male disciples. In a moment, I will invite this Immortal Master Wu to step out and introduce him to everyone. As for whether or not they have this good fortune, it will depend on their karma.”

If the words he had spoken before were only meant to arouse the envy of everyone present, the Prince Xin's following words were naturally like a huge meat bun that had just landed on everyone's heads, surprising them all. Instantly, the sound of people expressing their deep gratitude began to sound out.

An Immortal cultivator! This was a real Immortal walking on the earth. As long as one succeeded in cultivating, he or she could live a few hundred years and would even know how to use Immortal magic and techniques. If these important figures' own offsprings were lucky enough to become a disciple, how great a backing would that be?!

When Han Li heard this, a strange feeling rose in his heart even though his expression appeared to be wooden.

He initially thought he had found the trail of the Devil Dao once Prince Xin spoke of the living Immortal.

But upon hearing that the Immortal wanted to wantonly accept disciples, something didn't seem right. How could cultivators who infiltrated other countries to cause trouble draw attention to themselves in such a way? Wasn't that setting themselves up as a target? Unless this cultivator was.....

Just as Han Li was thinking about this, in the midst of all the excitement, the living Immortal finally appeared in the room with an arrogant expression.

He wore a gray Daoist robe, and his hair and beard were completely white. His face was ruddy like an infant's, appearing completely like a legendary expert. This kind of image caused the majority of the people present to instantly believe his identity despite him having yet to use any sort of magic.

However, when Han Li saw this "Immortal master" who looked

like he came straight out of a painting, he was speechless for quite some time.

This was but a mere fifth-or sixth-layer Qi Condensation cultivator; if Han Li were to stretch out a finger, perhaps he could easily pinch him to death.

But this kind of “expert” was enough to cause high-ranking mortals to crowd around him, incessantly flattering and fawning over him. They hoped that this old Immortal would grant them a favor and accept one of their sons or daughters as a disciple.

When Qin Yan saw this, couldn’t help but feel somewhat restless; the elder behind him displayed an even more anxious gaze. They were both worried that if they were to act too late, all of the karma would be completely taken away by the other people.

Just as Qin Yan was hesitating, Han Li’s voice suddenly came from beside him.

“Relax, this person is not of the Devil Dao! As for whether or not you want your descendants to take him as their master, that’s entirely up to you! I am only here to ensure the safety of your Qin Clan! However, the cultivation of this “Immortal master” is..... Ha ha!”

While laughing coldly, Han Li’s voice suddenly disappeared.

Qin Yan was shocked; he hurriedly glanced at his surroundings

only to discover that apart from himself, no one seemed to have heard what was spoken to him. That old Brother Hua was still asking him incredulously why he didn't also head towards the Immortal master to allow his descendants to try out their karma.

At the same time, Elder Hua realized that this was why the strange illness that he had no way of curing was instantly cured by that person. It was because he was a cultivator!

Having said this, the elder couldn't be bothered to convince Qin Yan anymore; similarly, he also drew near to the white-haired elder. His grandson and granddaughter naturally followed closely behind him.

Chapter 288: Enchanting Confrontation

Seeing that even the normally extremely steady Elder Hua behaved in such a hurried manner, Qin Yan finally made his decision.

Although he could tell Han Li's disdain for this Immortal master from his tone, the other person was still a cultivator who was willing to accept disciples!

As for whether this immortal master's cultivation layer was high or low, he did not have the time to worry about that too much.

Originally he had given thought to have his own juniors apprentice themselves to Han Li. However, in the time he spent in contact with Han Li, he realized that Han Li hadn't the slightest interest in accepting disciples and was unable to pursue this matter.

His father had told him that when the first generation of the Qin Clan had grown wealthy, Immortal Master Li Huayuan made a trip to the Qin Clan to see if any of the children had Immortal karma. Unfortunately, not a single person had such luck, and Li Huayuan could only return with disappointment.

During Immortal Master Li's next visit to the Qin Clan, the matter of accepting disciples wasn't raised. According to the words of Immortal Master Li Huayuan, the Qin Clan's Immortal karma had only appeared for a single generation and that the Qin Clan descendants wouldn't have any destiny of becoming his disciples.

But now an opportunity for cultivation had appeared before his eyes; Qin Yan naturally had to give it a try.

With this thought, Qin Yan made his decision and called out for his several juniors to go over.

Han Li looked at the scene with a cool eye and didn't say anything.

Since he already gave Qin Yan a brief explanation, he naturally wouldn't further meddle with their business.

With that said, Han Li hadn't paid attention to whether the young masters and young madams of the Qin Clan had any spiritual roots. Among the mortals of the secular world, perhaps only one in ten thousand had spiritual roots. It was truly a pitifully small few!

Just as Han Li thought this, he suddenly saw that of the crowd of Qin Clan juniors who went over to Immortal Master Wu, two of them unexpectedly turned their head towards him and sneered at him. They appeared proud and satisfied, as if they were mocking him.

After Han Li saw this, he blankly stared for an instant before immediately breaking out in silent involuntary laughter.

Obviously, when these few people saw that Qin Yan didn't call

for Han Li to see if he had immortal karma, they believed that their Lord Grandfather Qin actually truly loved and favored them the most. Thus they appeared extremely content.

After Han Li inwardly shook his head, he felt disinclined to pay more attention to them and instead looked around the hall.

At this moment, those who remained seated without moving were an extreme few, only six or seven. The majority of those who had previously chosen to cut themselves off were displaying complete regret at this moment.

The only thing that aroused Han Li's attention was a senior and a youth sitting at the corner of the hall.

The elderly person was an azure robed old man over sixty years old with a head of gray hair. He appeared to be calmly tasting green tea, as if he wasn't paying mind to the matter of Immortal karma before him. The youth was smooth-skinned with delicate features. He occasionally looked in Immortal Master Wu's direction with disdain.

Although these two appeared to be sitting quite leisurely, when Han Li saw the two, he couldn't help but reveal a slight smile.

This old-young duo were unexpectedly both cultivators. Furthermore, their cultivation wasn't bad. The azure-robed old man appeared to have a cultivation base of the ninth layer while the youth cultivated to the sixth layer, not lower than that of Immortal Master Wu.

But what slightly shocked Han Li was that he didn't know what cultivation technique they used. They were able to almost completely restrain their own Spiritual Qi. Were it not for Han Li's greatly superior cultivation base, he truly wouldn't have easily been able to make out that they were cultivators.

As for that Immortal Master Wu, he naturally didn't have the ability to make out anything strange from the two.

This cultivation technique, capable of concealing one's Spiritual Qi from similarly ranked cultivators, immediately caught Han Li's interest.

If he could learn this method, then wouldn't it give him decisive opportunities during battles with similarly ranked cultivators?

With this thought, Han Li took a careful look at the two.

As a result, Han Li discovered something strange.

The pretty youth was actually a disguised woman with delicate white ears and thin holes on her earlobes.

Han Li was slightly stunned. That youth accidentally saw Han Li blankly staring at her and couldn't help but blush, returning a fierce glare back.

The movements of the young woman wearing men's clothes aroused the attention of the old man by her side. He wrinkled his brow and turned his head, taking an expressionless glance toward Han Li.

When Han Li saw this, he smiled toward the old man.

The azure-robed old man felt greatly surprised!

He originally believed that it was some clan's frivolous young master that had seen through his granddaughter's disguise and was looking at her with an obscene gaze. But he didn't expect that it was a completely unremarkable youth who was actually looking at her with a completely reckless and fearless manner.

The azure-robed old man grew a bit angry in his heart, and after muttering to himself for a moment, he softly closed his eyes.

This movement surprised Han Li for a moment, and he couldn't help but immediately guess, 'He closed his eyes... Could it be he wants to...'

Having yet to complete his thoughts, the old man's following actions completely confirmed Han Li's guess.

He saw the old man open his eyes and look at Han Li with a gaze filled with purple brilliance. He actually used a bewitchment type technique on Han Li; it seemed he wanted Han Li to make a fool of himself on the spot in order to teach him a small lesson.

When Han Li saw this, he found it a bit humorous.

An old man at the ninth layer of Qi Condensation actually wanted to use a bewitchment technique on a mid Foundation Establishment cultivator such as himself? Was he courting death?

By only striking back with a bit of magic power, he would certainly reverse the magic technique onto his opponent.

However, since Han Li was interested in obtaining the other party's Qi restraining cultivation technique, he naturally didn't want them to feel great animosity towards him.

Thus, he could only wear a slight smile on his face and look at the old man without the slightest appearance of anything strange.

This caused the azure-robed old man's cold smile to slowly become an expression of shock, immediately exposing an appearance of amazement.

The old man inwardly yelled 'Not good!', but when he thought to move his eyes away, it was already too late.

The moment Han Li met the old man's gaze, a faint yellow radiance flashed in his eyes. His gaze drew the old man like a magnet, causing the old man to be incapable of moving his eyes away.

The azure-robed old man became scared and shocked while simultaneously feeling great regret.

He hadn't thought at all that this youth, who didn't appear to have the slightest bit of magic power, was actually a cultivator! Furthermore, his cultivation was vastly greater than his own.

Had he known sooner, he wouldn't have used the "Nightmare Technique" and allowed his consciousness to fall under the other party's complete control, incapable of breaking free of his grasp.

The old man became increasingly fearful, and in an instant, his forehead was covered with beads of sweat the size of soybeans, his face ashen. However, his eyes were still rigidly staring at Han Li.

The young woman wearing male clothing at his side eventually saw that her senior wasn't moving. She anxiously pulled on the old man's sleeve with haste.

Surprisingly, this tore away at the azure-robed old man's confinement, allowing the old man to easily break away from Han Li's gaze and freeing him from the backlash of the Nightmare Technique.

Right now, the azure-robed old man felt that he had barely escaped from entering the cycle of reincarnation. During this time, his mind had lagged behind, and he couldn't help but blankly stare for a moment. After a moment, he seemed to have woken up, and his consciousness returned to his body.

However, the back of his clothes had been thoroughly soaked with cold sweat.

At this moment, he hastily said a few words with a soft voice and a terrified expression to the young woman. Afterwards, he didn't dare to look in Han Li's direction again.

The azure-robed old man clearly understood that the young woman couldn't have possibly broken his daze so easily, which meant that he must have been treated leniently by the other party.

Although he didn't know why the other party had done so, it would be better for this grandparent-grandchild pair to go far far away from here.

The cultivation base of the youth with a common appearance was truly fearsome.

Furthermore, what puzzled him was that although he had used the Heaven's Eye technique to examine him, he couldn't see the slightest fluctuation of magic power on his body. Otherwise, he wouldn't have rashly used the "Nightmare Technique".

"Could it be this person's cultivation has reached..."

Once the azure-robed old man made his guess, his face grew green.

If it were as he guessed, then hadn't he provoked a major power

that should never be provoked?

With this thought, the sliver of consciousness that the old man had just recovered became turbulent.

Startled, the young woman in male clothing looked at the old man's face as it changed between green and red. She felt great astonishment, seeing this.

In her mind, her grandfather, who was always calm and collected with an expression as steady as Mt. Tai, was actually dumbfounded! Could it be that the seemingly-ordinary youth was truly so fearsome?

With this thought, she couldn't help but have the urge turn her head and study Han Li.

However, without waiting for her to move her head, the old man seemed to have seen through the young woman's intent and suddenly whispered to her gravely, "Don't provoke that youngster. If my guess isn't wrong, then he's likely to be a Foundation Establishment cultivator. You mustn't provoke him no matter what!"

"What? A Foundation Establishment cultivator! Impossible, he's only a youth!" The young woman covered her gasp of shock with her jade hands. She turned pale and didn't dare to be too loud.

Chapter 289: Immortal's Technique

Although the young lady's charming face revealed doubt, she knew her grandfather wasn't one to babble nonsense and became extremely shocked! She could only resist further looking in Han Li's direction with some difficulty

Seeing that he taught the other party a small lesson without truly harming him, Han Li was fully satisfied.

At this moment, his lips slightly moved and transmitted his voice over.

Then the azure-robed old man immediately heard Han Li's voice.

"After you leave the Prince Xin's mansion, don't hurry to depart. Wait for me at the mansion's back gate. I have a few matters to ask you!"

Han Li's voice was filled with the unquestionable tone of a command, stunning the old man and causing him to inwardly curse in his heart without end.

"Could it be this expert doesn't want to let this grandparent-grandchild pair go? What plan does he have for these two in mind! Regardless, it's fortunate for me that the other party doesn't seem to be the merciless type. There shouldn't be any danger! Furthermore, being able to form a relationship with a Foundation Establishment cultivator is an invigorating opportunity that's hard to come by for a clan."

The azure-robed old man could only think these comforting thoughts. However, his heart was a mess, and he was suffering internally without end!

When Han Li saw this, he faintly smiled and returned his attention to the old white-haired Daoist.

At this moment, Immortal Master Wu had already finished inspecting the majority of the crowd and still hadn't found someone with Immortal karma.

The youngster who were declared to lack Immortal karma could only dejectedly return to their seats. Their seniors naturally didn't have any pleased expressions.

“What's Immortal karma? He's clearly looking for people with spiritual roots. However, this old Daoist isn't a completely ignorant and appears to truly be looking to accept disciples! Otherwise, he could just casually point to a few random people.” Han Li indifferently thought this as he saw the old Daoist examining each of the youths for spiritual roots with extreme care.

However, Han Li felt that looking for disciples here was truly futile. Among these fifty to sixty people, the chances of finding someone with spiritual roots were truly too low!

Just as Han Li thought this, the old white-haired Daoist loudly shouted, “This child has Immortal karma. I can accept him as my disciple!”

When Han Li heard this, he blankly stared. He couldn't help but look at this person with Immortal karma.

He only saw a simple and fat youth standing in front of Immortal Master Wu with a vacant expression, not knowing what to do.

A large pot-bellied middle-aged man wearing purple silk robes stood next to the boy. He closely asked with an incredulous expression, "Immortal Master, my clan's child Jing truly has Immortal karma? Are you mistaken!"

This man felt that a huge meat pie had truly fallen on his head and didn't dare to believe it. For so many years, this son of his had never shown the slightest of talent or accomplished anything. But now, the youth who only ate and didn't give back to society had unexpectedly caught the eye of this Immortal master. The youth's father truly didn't know if he was dreaming.

"Hehe, Benefactor, be at ease! This humble Daoist has already examined this boy many times. Your son truly has Immortal roots and can study Immortal techniques together with the prince's son." When Immortal Master Wu saw this, he twirled his white beard around his finger and smiled.

"Many thanks, Immortal Master! Many thanks! Although this one isn't a wealthy and great noble, we still have a bit of meager land. Tomorrow, I will certainly prepare a great offering for accepting my son as your apprentice! Son! Quicky... Quicky kowtow to the Immortal Master!" After the middle-aged man

verified this matter with certainty, he danced with joy and began speaking incoherently.

When the youngsters who hadn't been chosen saw this, they were dumbfounded.

The person who entered Immortal Wu's eyes was Fatty Tong, whom they had always regarded as useless!

This kind of useless person actually had Immortal roots. This was far too hard to believe!

Not only did the youngsters think this, but their seniors also couldn't help but look at each other in dismay and feel that this was quite incredulous.

After all, this useless youth Tong Jing had been chosen instead of their own sons.

Han Li's expression, on the other hand, wasn't the slightest bit strange.

People who possess spiritual roots weren't always handsome and confident or ravishly beautiful. Furthermore, there wasn't the slightest relationship with their capacity for knowledge either. There was absolutely no pattern that could determine whether someone possessed spiritual roots.

Otherwise, cultivator clans wouldn't have appeared, and

cultivator sects wouldn't have to go out and seek brilliant students either.

However, to actually find someone with spiritual roots in a small group was a bit surprising to Han Li. It seemed that the luck of this Daoist Priest wasn't bad!

Naturally, the others in the hall didn't understand this grain of truth that Han Li and the other cultivators clearly knew.

They all whispered to each other in soft voices.

There were a few shrewd individuals among them who started to doubt the authenticity of this Immortal Wu and were slightly hesitant to come forward to test themselves when they heard this.

As such, the old Daoist was met with a moment of awkward silence.

When Prince Xin saw this, he showed displeasure.

However, those in the hall had been his good friends for many years, so he couldn't just say something unpleasant. He could only tactfully say to the old Daoist, "Immortal Master Wu, everyone here is but a common mortal. They have not yet witnessed Immortal techniques and magic. Could Immortal Master please reveal your power and broaden everyone's horizons?"

Having heard Prince Xin's words, everyone immediately grew

quiet and waited to see what the Immortal Master would say.

The old white-haired Daoist muttered to himself for a moment and openly agreed. Then he called for everyone to follow him to the open area in front of the large hall.

Following the old Daoist's words, everyone flowed out of the large hall. Han Li also followed them out, but he did so indifferently.

Surprisingly, that grandparent-grandchild pair didn't move. It seemed they were deeply worried about Han Li's appointment with them.

Outside the guest hall, the old Daoist stood while surrounded by the crowd and started to cast magic.

From the gestures his hands executed, his even stance, and his faint muttering of incantation in a low voice, his appearance grew even more mysterious.

As such, the spectators around him held their breath and rigidly stared at the old Daoist without moving.

But when Han Li heard this incantation, he inwardly rolled his eyes.

At this moment, the old Daoist joined his palms, and after he separated them, two roaring, fist-sized fireballs appeared in his

hands. The nearby temperature suddenly rose, and the smell of flames filled the air.

This was none other than the “Fireball Technique” that all cultivators with fire spiritual roots knew!

But what was viewed as a common occurrence to cultivators immediately caused the nearby crowd to gasp in surprise. They felt it was truly inconceivable!

But the next scene not only caused these mortals to continue with their stupefaction, but it also greatly shocked Han Li.

That was because the old Daoist then changed his hand incantations and caused the roasting fireballs to gradually fuse and transform before the crowd’s eyes.

First, the combined flame gradually grew wings. Then a pointed beak, immediately followed by thin claws and a tail, transforming into a small and exquisite flame bird.

“Could it be the Firebird Technique!”

Having seen this, Han Li nerves tightened, not daring to believe his eyes in the slightest.

The “Firebird Technique” was a genuine mid-grade magic technique, one that Han Li himself was unable to grasp. However this mere Qi Condensation cultivator was unexpectedly able to use

it on the spot. It was truly far too hard to believe! It was no wonder that Han Li wondered if he had seen incorrectly.

However, Han Li's shock only lasted for a short moment.

Soon after the old Daoist casted his magic, Han Li discovered a huge discrepancy between this fire bird and the genuine "Firebird Technique".

Although this small bird created from fireballs resembled the appearance of the firebird magic technique, the discrepancy in size was far too great.

When the firebird from the "Firebird Technique" spread its wings, it spanned over three meters. Instead, the firebird that this old Daoist created was only the size of a fist. It was fundamentally impossible to mention them on equal terms.

But what truly convinced Han Li that this was but a false firebird technique was the magnitude of its fluctuation of magic power.

The destructive power of the true Firebird Technique wasn't something a Foundation Establishment cultivator dared to receive. However, the magic power fluctuations of this small and exquisite sparrow-like firebird were exactly the same as a fireball; it wasn't greater in the least.

It seemed it was merely a change of shape!

After Han Li thought this through, he was in good spirits and found it quite funny!

He had nearly been tricked by this small trick. It truly caused one to lose face!

However, this person's flame manipulation technique was truly astonishing! Han Li didn't know whether he could match the fine control of flame that this Qi Condensation cultivator could accomplish.

This old Daoist piqued Han Li's interest!

In his next performance, the old Daoist thoroughly verified Han Li's thoughts.

After seeing the small firebird spread its wings and soar, it immediately fell to the floor and transformed into a dog that cheerfully ran around the old Daoist.

Not long after, the small dog transformed into a fire snake, then transformed a small person...

This series of astonishing performances left these mortals dumbstruck and speechless with gaping mouths, having never seen magic techniques before.

Then the old Daoist suddenly pointed a finger from his hand and made the final transformation of the flame into a small horse. The

new form charged towards a small cherry sapling to the side. In the blink of an eye, the flame combusted and turned the sapling into ash.

This was the end of the old Daoist's show.

At this moment, the spectators woke from their daze and did their utmost to hail the old Daoist 'Immortal Daoist'.

Their original doubts had long been cast away. How could they show the slightest bit of disbelief!

Chapter 290: Young Prince

Prince Xin looked at the cheering crowd with a smile, feeling content in his heart.

With regards to cultivators, they used to appear before great noble and influential clans. But for some unknown reason, they gradually stopped, not making much contact with the mortal world. As such, people such as the Immortal Master quickly became the stuff of folklore. Even as a kin of the royal family, this was the first cultivator Prince Xin had seen with his own eyes.

The shocking display of magic techniques that the old Daoist revealed naturally caused Prince Xin to feel great face.

Of course, Prince Xin did not know that during the period when cultivators still appeared in the secular world, the cultivation world had yet to establish the Great Immortal Ascension Assembly.

During those times, low-level rogue cultivators as well as those from cultivation clans with no hope for Foundation Establishment gave up their aspirations and wished to live out their lives in the mortal world in wealth and splendor. However, with the appearance of the Great Immortal Ascension Assembly, cultivators could fight for their hopes of reaching Foundation Establishment. With this assembly, why would they choose to appear in the mortal world ever again? Naturally, they would be bitterly cultivating in seclusion deep within the mountains.

Of course, those without the heart to cultivate like Yu Zhitong,

who became a depraved cultivator in the secular world, were an exception, and their numbers were quite few. They would become honored guests of great, affluent noble clans and enter complete seclusion, not daring to allow outsiders to know of their presence.

After all, to become a guest of some mortal clan was a matter that would cause extreme loss of face in the cultivation world.

As such, although it wasn't rare for cultivators to appear in the secular world, those willing to associate with influential nobles and become their esteemed guests were extremely few in number. Also, the cultivators who mingled with mortals kept all knowledge of their actions extremely concealed in order to prevent their fellow cultivators from looking down on them.

This crowd of guests truly hadn't seen other cultivators before. Naturally, they drew the frightening conclusion that the old Daoist was a celestial being from his beautiful fire-manipulation technique.

Under everyone's gaze, the white-haired old man returned to the large hall with a proud appearance.

At this moment, these people couldn't wait to be tested and impatiently called out to him as "Immortal Master". They immediately crowded about him, wanting Immortal Master Wu to examine them for spiritual roots.

With vigorous spirit, the old white-haired Daoist looked through everyone who remained without refusing anyone.

Unfortunately, the juniors of the Hua Clan and the Qin Clan didn't have any spiritual roots; they were only but common mortals.

This information dealt a heavy blow to those who stepped forward to be examined. They could only dejectedly leave the old Daoist's side.

It seemed Immortal karma was truly not so easily come by!

As such, people began to look at that increasingly prominent young fatty "Tong Jing's" rare spiritual roots with envious glares. This caused the father and son standing at the old Daoist's side to smile widely, unable to contain their emotions.

Han Li's expression remained the same as he saw Qin Yan bring back the dejected young masters and madams of the Qin Clan. When they looked at Han Li, they had a somewhat wretched appearance.

"I am still unconvinced! Why does that good for nothing have spiritual roots and we don't? Aren't we a hundred times better than him!" A dainty Qin Clan young madam mumbled to herself with disbelief.

"Enough, don't speak nonsense! With the life you have now, what's there to complain about?" Qin Yan's expression darkened as he turned his head to rebuke the young woman before sitting down.

These words caused the Qin Clan's well-known pungent loudmouth to pout; an unsatisfied expression still remained on her face.

At this moment, Old Man Hua brought his grandchildren over. Without saying a word, he sat at Qin Yan's side.

After they looked at each other, they suddenly wore bitter smiles as if they were fellow brothers sharing a mutual pain.

"Dear Little Brother Qin, it seems that the Fatty Tong suddenly made it in this world!" Old Man Hua said jokingly.

"Sigh! This is quite normal. Anyone that has good children would've immediately become a patron of that Immortal master!" Qin Yan sighed again and said this with a begrudging tone.

"However..."

Old Man Hua and Qin Yan began to have a chat.

However, although they were chatting with each other, they were also diverting their attention toward the actions of Immortal Master Wu and Prince Xin.

At this moment, Prince Xin was looking at the juniors being tested for Immortal roots. He then turned his head towards a

young maid and whispered something to her.

The young maid immediately went out the side door to carry out the mysterious order given to her.

After that, Prince Xin turned his head around and coughed several times. He then leisurely said with a smile, “Following the celebration of my favored concubine’s recovery, my son Quanzi and Honorable Nephew Tong will be apprenticed to Immortal Master Wu. Everyone, please celebrate and give them your regards!”

With that said, Prince Xin extended his hands without the slightest of hesitation and fiercely clapped.

Clap! Clap!

Applause soon rang out as pairs of cleanly-dressed maids and servants walked in from outside the hall with trays of fine foods and wine in their hands.

Then with incomparable skill, they walked over to each table. Each winecup was filled to the brim with shining pink wine. The large hall was filled with the scent of dishes and alcohol in the blink of an eye.

“Come, this prince will raise the first cup!” Prince Xin loudly yelled, raising a winecup respectfully given to him by a servant over his head.

“Cheers to the Prince!”

.....

Immediately after everyone drank a cup, the atmosphere of the hall surged.

Not long after, the many guests started toasting cups to one another.

The banquet had finally started!

Prince Xin and that Honorable Nephew he called Jing'er were talking and laughing during the feast, seemingly deepening their friendship. The expected arrogance of a prince wasn't seen.

It was no wonder that Qin Yan and the others held such praise for Prince Xin!

That Immortal Master Wu didn't take a seat. Instead, when Prince Xin raised his wine cup, he wordlessly left.

This caused many who thought to suck up to Immortal Master Wu during the banquet to feel greatly disappointed.

However, this kind of thinking was quite ordinary. How could a living Immortal drink, party and lavishly feast like a mortal!

After they thought it through, these people gave up. Letting go of their previous intentions, they went to feast with the others.

Halfway through the feast, Prince Xin called for a group of female dancers to perform an elegant and complicated palace dance to add to the enjoyment. This caused the atmosphere to soar to the climax.

At this moment, a white-clothed youth who appeared about twenty years old entered the hall. He appeared very cultured and had a tall, thin stature. Each and every one of his movements held an elegant poise. This was absolutely the image of an ideal lover that many young women held in their hearts.

“Ming’er, come and greet your uncles!!” When Prince Qin saw this youth, he immediately happily called out to him.

Fortunately, Prince Xin just happened to be at Qin Yan’s table. Thus, the refined youth walked over with a smile.

“It is good to see you again, uncles!” The youth courteously said.

“I don’t dare to be called that! The young prince is too polite.”

Qin Yan and Old Man Hua didn’t dare to overreach themselves and hastily stood to greet him.

“Ai! You two are his seniors. Ming’er should be greeting you with courtesy. Why do you act like outsiders?” Prince Xin interjected with some dissatisfaction.

When Qin Yan and Old Man Hua heard this, they looked at each other and appeared somewhat embarrassed.

Those words weren’t incorrect! However, how could these two treat a member of the royal family as their junior!

However, these two cunning old foxes changed the subject with a few quick words. Afterwards, they introduced the juniors behind them, allowing the exceptionally forthright prince to recognize them. This was a seldom opportunity for the juniors to make themselves known!

Naturally, Han Li was included among those introduced.

When Han Li was introduced, Prince Xin’s eyes brightened as he repeatedly sized up Han Li several times with great interest. His face wore a mysterious smile. It was clear this person knew a few details of the rumors surrounding Han Li.

This caused embarrassment to surge forth on his face again.

“Ming’er, come over here. Come meet this Honorable Brother Han!”

It was unknown what Prince Xin was thinking, but he

unexpectedly had the young prince meet Han Li with a smile.

Having heard his father, the young prince walked over and politely called out “Elder Brother Han”. Then he cupped his hands toward Han Li, maintaining a gentle expression the entire time.

Somehow, each moment carried out by this elegant and graceful young prince enchanted the several nearby young madams of age, leaving them unable free themselves from his charm.

Han Li returned the salute with a lost and foolish appearance, as if he were too nervous. In his heart, however, he felt himself in perilous situation, preventing him from maintaining his calm.

When this young prince moved forward to salute Han Li, he unexpectedly gave him a feeling of danger similar to that of the mansion’s chief steward. Although it didn’t feel as strongly oppressive as that of the chief steward, it was undoubtedly the same feeling of danger.

“What’s the matter?”

Han Li became extremely shocked as his heart sank into bewilderment.

Chapter 291: Xiao Clan

This handsome young prince naturally didn't know what Han Li was thinking. Instead, he said a few warm words of greetings to the previously acquainted Qin Clan juniors and chatted with them, causing two of the young madams to blush. Their affection appeared to surge.

When Han Li saw this, he coldly laughed inwardly.

This young prince was indeed questionable. If these Qin Clan madams truly threw themselves into his arms, there definitely wouldn't be a good result.

Even if the young prince were to taste them and then leave them bare, Han Li wouldn't find it strange at all!

After a short moment, Prince Xin said a few modest words to Qin Yan and brought the young prince away to socialize at another table. This caused the Qin Clan juniors as well as the Hua pair that was speaking the prince to feel disappointment.

Han Li took advantage of when nobody was paying attention and took a look at the back of the young prince, muttering under his breath as something flashed across his eyes.

After several hours later, the feast came to an end.

Once the guests were fully satisfied, they started to say their

goodbyes to Prince Xin.

Qin Yan had also brought Han Li and his juniors say their goodbyes. They then departed from the front gate of Prince Xin's residence.

Just as Lord Qin thought to have Han Li board the carriage with him, Han Li suddenly asked something, much to his surprise.

“Uncle Qin, could tell me who those two are? Do you know?”

Although Han Li's words were polite, Lord Qin didn't dare to slight him. He hastily turned his head to look and answered, “Honorable Nephew Han is talking about those two? Yi! That's the lord of the Xiao Clan! He's the owner of a famous restaurant in Yuejing, the Leisurely Cloud. Since he is a very low-profile character, I am not very familiar with him. As for the unfamiliar youngster by his side, he should be his grandson!”

After Qin Yan saw that Han Li was looking at this grandfather-grandchild pair, he wore an expression of surprise. He didn't know why Han Li suddenly became interested in these two.

“Oh, so it's like that! Uncle Qin, you should leave first. I will return to the residence a bit later.” Han Li thoughtfully nodded his head and then replied.

Without waiting for Qin Yan's reply, he slowly walked around the small around next to the residence's wall.

Qin Yan blankly looked at Han Li's back and then stealthily turned his gaze towards the Xiao Clan Lord, feeling a bit puzzled.

But after a bit of thought, Qin Yan decided to board the carriage and ordered his servant to drive away.

Thus, the Qin Clan carriages departed from the front gate of Prince Xin's residence and returned to the Qin Residence in the east district.

Those Qin Clan young masters and madams simply didn't discover Han Li's disappearance. Instead, they were in the back two carriages discussing what had transpired at Prince Xin's residence today.

They were incomparably excited! They felt that although they didn't have Immortal karma, they had stories to later flaunt off to their friends once they returned.

...

After Han Li walked for the time it took to make a cup of tea, he eventually reached the back gate of the prince's mansion after walking around the tall walls of Prince Xin's estate.

At this moment, the tall back gates were securely closed. Not a single person was in sight.

Han Li smiled and felt this was just right. This way, he wouldn't have to use any concealment magic techniques.

He arrogantly stood in front of the back gate and raised his head to look at the sky with idle boredom.

After a moment of time, Han Li became blankly lost in thought.

Suddenly, Han Li felt there were people approaching with cowered backs. He lowered his head and took a cold look.

The only people he saw were the Xiao Clan Lord and the young woman dressed in male clothing. They walked over from the other side of the residence's gate. When the old man saw Han Li, his figure became sluggish and exposed an appearance of hesitation. On the other hand, the young woman by his side wore an extremely curious expression and didn't hold the slightest appearance of fear.

The old man immediately realized something, and his expression immediately became tranquil. He walked forward in large strides, the young woman closely following after him.

“This junior Xiao Zhen greatly thanks Senior for the lenient treatment inside the prince's mansion! If this one has offended you, Junior is willing to apologize.”

After walking in front of Han Li, this Lord Xiao was still unable to determine how deep Han Li's cultivation was and became

shocked. Feeling even more reverence toward Han Li, he rushed to salute him and respectfully apologize.

Han Li's expression didn't change after receiving the salute. He then faintly said, "You aren't bitterly cultivating in some secluded area with abundant Spiritual Qi. Why have you appeared in Yuejing? Could it be you were reluctant to depart from your worldly affairs and splendor? Were you unwilling to continue your cultivation?"

Regardless of the outcome, Han Li first accused the old man of an unwarranted charge in order to easily overwhelm the other party and impose his own will; this would allow later affairs to flow more smoothly.

"Senior misunderstands. Because this junior's age is far too old, he no longer has a chance to reach Foundation Establishment. Thus, the clan appointed him as the steward in charge of our sources of revenue in the secular world. It isn't about returning to the secular world and staying there." When the azure-robed old man heard Han Li's words, his heart relaxed, and he replied with a calm appearance.

"You are the disciple of a clan?" Han Li didn't easily let them off and closely questioned this.

Han Li wanted to get a feeling on where this grandfather-grandchild pair stood. If they were from a few famous cultivation clan, Han Li would be unwilling to provoke them. However, the surname Xiao didn't seem to be from a well-known clan!

After he heard Han Li's question, the old man hesitated for a moment. He turned his head to the young woman by his side before sincerely replying:

"This Junior is from the Yun Province's Feng River Mountain Stream's Xiao Clan!"

"Feng River Mountain Stream's Xiao Clan?" Han Li wrinkled his brow and carefully thought about it. He was certain he had never heard of such a name.

"Senior doesn't need to think so much about it. The Xiao Clan this Junior belongs to is but a small clan. Having never heard of it is a normal matter." Lord Xiao's face sank as he said this mockingly.

Han Li was a bit surprised. After he sized up Lord Xiao several times, he calmly asked with his normal expression, "You speak quite straightforwardly. Are you not afraid that I would immediately exterminate you two?"

The old man didn't react to Han Li's words. However, that young woman appeared to be a small kitten that had her tail stepped on. Her expression tightened as she immediately put her hand on her waist. There was no question that the bulge she was grasping was a storage pouch.

But soon after, the young woman saw that neither her grandfather nor Han Li truly moved to act. With a red face, she put

her hand away but was at a loss of where she should place it. She dilemma appeared extremely adorable!

When the old man saw this, he glanced at the young woman affectionately before turning his head to Han Li and saying with a bitter smile, “Although this one is incapable of seeing through the deepness of your esteemed self’s cultivation, he is certain you are a Foundation Establishment cultivator. This one clearly understands this.”

“Junior doesn’t believe that he has any magic tools, medicine pills, or any such treasures that a high-level cultivator would covet.”

“If Senior truly was such a person, Junior would be unable to do anything. With this one’s meager cultivation, running and resistance is futile. One may as well surrender and fulfill Senior’s wishes instead of having him take out his anger on this one’s entire clan! Junior only asks that Senior treat this one leniently and let this one’s granddaughter go. She is this Junior’s sole remaining descendant.”

The old man’s last few words were extremely dismal. This caused the young woman to become extremely frightened and angry. She hastily said with discontent, “Grandpa, you need not be afraid! If he truly wishes to act against you, we will fight together! Then we won’t need to fear him!”

When Han Li heard the words of Lord Xiao and the young woman, he stared blankly for a moment. But once he fully understood what the pair planned to do, he became amused.

Apart from this old man's dreary words and appearance of selfless martyrdom, Han Li didn't see the slightest sign that he was seeking death. In fact, his magic power fluctuations indicated he was storing power in preparation. There wasn't the slightest intention of surrender!

If it was clear he wanted to kill them for treasures, they intended to stake it all in a fight.

That young woman was also quite amusing.

Although her words were indignant, whenever she wasn't looking at Han Li with her black shining eyes, she was incessantly looking around, frequently exposing a crafty air.

However, this young woman didn't know that ever since Han Li had completed the first layer of the "Great Development Technique", his spiritual sense was far stronger than that of common cultivators. Her petty tricks had already fallen into Han Li's grasp.

Han Li inwardly thought, 'Perhaps this "Feng River Mountain Stream's Xiao Clan" was something off the top of his minds. As for whether there is such a clan, even he doubts it!'

Thus, Han Li wore a mysterious smile on his face as he silently look at the two of them.

Since he neither said these two could leave nor did he make any hostile movements, the grandfather-grandchild pair stayed still for the time.

From the beginning, the old man and the young woman had preserved their solemn and grim appearance.

But after some time had passed, Han Li indifferent stared at them with a lazy appearance. The old man Xiao and the young woman eventually looked at each other in dismay.

“What does Senior intend to do?” The young woman was unable to endure in the end. Breaking past the old man’s restricting gaze, she jumped in front of Han Li and loudly asked, pointing at Han Li with an expression of grievance.

Chapter 292: The Powerful

Han Li's expression didn't change, so she couldn't make out any anger from his gaze. However, the old man could clearly feel cold intent coming from Han Li's body.

Afraid, the old man had yet to pull the young woman behind him when Han Li's body released a shocking grandeur. The fearsome spiritual pressure that was accumulated actually caused the nearby young woman to fly back seven or eight steps. She didn't have the slightest power to resist.

Fortunately, the old man's eyes and hands were swift. His figure flashed behind the young woman, his hands clapping her shoulders to stop the young woman's body from being pushed further back.

At this moment, the young woman's face was as pale as paper. After personally experiencing the fearsomeness of Han Li's cultivation, she couldn't help but lose herself to fear and look at her grandfather behind her.

The old man's appearance was equivalently unsightly!

Before this, the old man had a few bits of confidence that with their combined strength, they would be able to escape Han Li's grasp. But now that they experienced a small demonstration of his true strength, this thought was thrown away.

Foundation Establishment cultivators were fearsome and far

exceeded what he had imagine. They absolutely weren't figures that a small cultivator could provoke.

The old man broke out in an endless old sweat. He had actually been planning to carry out a small trick on Han Li with his granddaughter's help!

The old man had never seen an expert like Han Li before, a foolish cultivator who only knew how to bitterly cultivate! Fortunately, he had accumulated a vast experience, so his response was faster than average.

Could it be this person was an old eccentric who had lived for over a hundred years, keeping his appearance young through some sort of appearance-halting technique?

The more the old man thought about it, the more he felt this was true and the greater the terror he felt in his heart!

After the old man felt the spiritual pressure coming from Han Li's body grow increasingly stronger as time passed, the old man couldn't help but gulp and immediately beg with a trembling stomach, "Senior, please let us off leniently. This one's granddaughter was far too young. She doesn't know what is high or low. Senior, please calm down!"

After Han Li gave the old man a cold glance, he suddenly stopped emitting the frightening grandeur from his body; it seemed Han Li saw through true meaning behind his words. In an instant, the pressure had become completely hidden as if entrenched in deep

water.

With hands trembling from fear, old man Xiao took his hands off the shoulder of the young woman who had become well-behaved long ago. After taking a stealthy look at Han Li, she immediately turned her gaze away, not daring to directly look at him.

Her current behavior was as different as Heaven and Earth from the fearless expression she had shown before.

However, this dainty young woman was now extremely startled pale. much like a frightened small bird. It was a truly a lovingly heart-stirring appearance.

(TL: moe)

Seeing this, Han Li felt something being revealed before his eyes. This was the first time he had discovered a woman who held such a fragile beauty; it truly moved the heart and soul. Her overall appearance gave him a breathtaking feeling, and he couldn't help but glance several times.

After carefully looking over the young woman's appearance, although he made out that she wasn't very old, only fourteen or fifteen years of age, she was a rarely seen beauty. Given a few more years, she would most likely mature into an extraordinary beauty that would drive men mad.

Because Han Li's gaze toward the young girl was a bit too strange,

the old man's heart furiously sunk when he saw this.

‘Could it be he had us come here because her appearance was to his liking? Did he take a fancy to my granddaughter's beauty? That isn't good at all. With this person's great magic power, we won't be able to resist him!’ The old man's imagination ran wild with deep worry.

“Since you two aren't willing to reveal your clan, you are probably clanless rogue cultivations. I won't make it difficult for you. I had you come here for a trade, after which you may leave.”

After a long moment of silence, Han Li eventually spoke.

“A trade?”

The old man blankly stared. He faintly felt that he had been thinking incorrectly.

“That's right! I took a fancy to something you possessed and wanted to propose a trade with you!” Han Li replied with a dull expression.

When the old man heard this, he couldn't help but look at the young girl and think, ‘Does he want to me to trade away my own granddaughter?!’

But when he thought about it more, it seemed truly unlikely, because apart from the several glances he took a moment ago, he

hadn't taken another look at his granddaughter.

With this thought, the old man relaxed a bit and said with solemn respect, "I don't know what caught Senior's eye, but since we are only juniors, we will naturally offer it to Senior! However, this small old man doesn't know what item this Senior wants."

The old man's last words revealed the misgivings in his heart.

When Han Li saw the other party's tact, his appearance eased up and he revealed a slight smile.

"What cultivation technique did you use inside the hall? You were actually able to conceal your Spiritual Qi so well that the Qi Condensation Daoist Priest wasn't able to see through your identities." Han Li didn't directly reply to the old man. Instead, he asked him a question with a mild tone.

After revealing such a strong face, he naturally used a slightly appeasing tactic. Using both hard and soft methods was the ideal strategy!

When they heard Han Li's question, the two of them couldn't help but look at each other with doubt before saying with some hesitation, "Senior, this one also doesn't know what cultivation technique he used."

Surprisingly, Han Li didn't get angry. Instead, he continued to look at the old man with an stoic expression. He knew that since

the other party mentioned this, they would give him a fair explanation.

Sure enough, the old man then cautiously continued, “The cultivation technique this one used actually came from a badly damaged, nameless Daoist book. It didn’t even mention the name of this Spiritual Qi restraining magic technique. We only casually practiced it!”

‘Nameless Daoist book?’

“As for where it came from, don’t tell me it was passed down within your clan!” After Han Li heard this, his face revealed interest, his words carrying a profound meaning.

If this magic technique was passed down within a clan, every great cultivation sect would have madly fought to get a hold of this technique. However, Han Li had never heard of such a cultivation technique before!

“Senior sees clearly. This Daoist book was something my granddaughter found inside a cave while exploring an uninhabited mountain. Apart from this Qi Restraining chant, we didn’t understand anything else from the book. If Senior wants it, Junior will go back to his residence and offer it to you!” the old man promised with a compensating smile.

When Han Li heard the old man’s words, he revealed a satisfied expression and said, “Be at ease, I won’t take your items for nothing! You two return first and wait for me at your residence!

Make sure you consider what you want in exchange for it.”

Han Li's voice was extremely calm. But after he said these words, he suddenly extended his finger, whereupon two soybean-sized green lights shot out from Han Li's finger. In an instant, it flew into the bodies of the old man and young girl without leaving a trace.

“Senior, you...” The old man was frightened and angry. He didn't think that after he finished speaking, Han Li would suddenly act against the two. Although he didn't know what happened, he was certain it wasn't anything good. The young girl also went pale with fright.

“There is no need to worry! These are only tracing marks. With these, I can accurately find you and eliminate you and your grandchild at any time should the need ever arise,” Han Li explained indifferently.

After hearing these words, the old man let out a breath and bitterly laughed in his heart many times!

This Senior truly didn't leave any holes, not even the slightest opening for them.

With this on their bodies, if they tried to take advantage of the situation and escape, it was likely they wouldn't make it very far.

However, the old man Xiao clearly understood the reason behind

Han Li's action!

If the other party didn't do this, it was likely that the old man would take his granddaughter and immediately slip away.

After all, to trade with an expert that could easily kill them was far too scary, especially when the stronger party seemed moody! While there were enormous benefits, the old man would normally require time to think it over and see whether it was worth the risk.

However, it seemed that now he must carry out this trade whether he wanted to or not.

He could only hope that after the other party wouldn't eliminate them after receiving the book.

In the short time he made contact with Han Li, he truly wasn't able to make out Han Li's temperament in the end.

He only knew that not only was this figure's magic power profound, but that he was also extremely troublesome! He would use every opportunity and method, and there was nothing he wouldn't do.

"Very well! These juniors will wait at their dwelling for Senior to arrive." The old man could only pretend to act as if nothing had happened and say this with great respect.

"Very good. I will come to take the item at night. You two had

best behave!”

As Han Li said this, his body gradually became indistinct. He disappeared without a trace once the last word “behave” left his mouth, leaving only air in his place.

Seeing that Han Li revealed this extremely mysterious skill, old man Xiao could only give up with a deathly pale face.

He dispiritedly called out to the young girl and slowly walked back home.

However, the old man didn’t realize that when his granddaughter saw Han Li using those ghostlike movements, great envy flashed in her eyes. Even when the old man called out to her, she reacted as if she had woken up from a dream.

As the young girl followed after the old man, she turned her head to look at the place where Han Li had disappeared with surprising reluctance.

‘That child is truly [mischievous](#)!’ Hiding in a nearby tree, Han Li coldly looked at the two as they departed and shook his head.

(TL: “mischievous”, originally 人小鬼大: although the body is small, the craftiness is great.)

Chapter 293: Infiltration

Han Li was quite familiar with the obsessed expression the young woman revealed as she departed.

The very first time he saw Li Huayuan control that huge flood dragon, he also had this envious gaze.

With this thought, Han Li felt that this beautiful young woman was truly interesting.

After he slightly smiled, he silently disappeared from the tree. He reappeared within the tall walls of the prince's mansion.

At this moment, not only did Han Li use the “Invisibility Technique” that would hide him from mortals, but he also used the “Qi Restraining Technique”, a Qi concealment technique that cultivators could use only after achieving Foundation Establishment.

He quickly flashed by the scurrying maids and servants within the prince's residence without anyone noticing anything out of the ordinary.

After a moment, Han Li infiltrated into the back residence of the prince's mansion. He secretly hid behind a pillar at some desolate corridor and watched everything nearby with a cold gaze.

Not long after, a somewhat pretty maid walked nearby. Han Li

suddenly shot out a ball of yellow light the size of a fist from his finger, striking the maid's head. The maid suddenly staggered as if she were about fall onto the floor.

Without waiting for her to fall, Han Li had already leaped out to grab her and flew back to hide behind the pillar.

With great skill, Han Li straightened the young maid's weak body and arranged it so that she faced him. He then opened his mouth and spouted out azure Spiritual Qi, which entered her tightly closed eyes.

At this moment, the young maid's eyelids started to move, and she slowly opened her eyes.

Just as the young maid was waking up, she saw a pair of gold yellow eyes staring at her coldly.

Just as she thought about yelling loudly and putting up a struggle, strange yellow streaks of light suddenly shot out from those eyes directly into her own.

The young maid immediately felt the world spin as her vision was filled with a golden yellow color. Then, with a tilted head, she lost consciousness.

Han Li took another look at the young maid who fainted and lightly sighed before lightly wiping away the sweat on her face.

Although he could only use the “Soul Controlling Technique” for a short amount of time, it truly consumed far too much of his attention and felt quite strenuous. It was no wonder that this magic technique was classified as a worthless Foundation Establishment technique.

Although this magic technique would make the target obediently follow the caster as a slave for a short amount of time, it had great limitations. As such, the cultivators who practiced this magic technique were truly few in number!

First of all, this magic technique could only be used on mortals. It didn't have the slightest effect on cultivators. Even if there was a great disparity in cultivation, so long as there was spiritual power coursing through their heads, other cultivators could easily counteract the technique's bewitchment effect.

Next, not only must whoever wished to practice this technique be at Foundation Establishment, their spiritual sense must be far stronger than average. Thus, the overwhelming majority of Foundation Establishment cultivators weren't able to practice this technique.

With these two restrictions, cultivators with interest in practicing this magic technique were pitifully few.

However, this was no problem for Han Li.

Han Li had originally been anxious that he would only be able to grasp a limited set of Foundation Establishment magic techniques.

The last time he was in the Heaven's Knowledge Pavilion, he had read the incantation of this magic technique and memorized it out of curiosity. Once he returned to his cave to cultivate it, he wasn't met with the slightest resistance and was able to smoothly succeed. This greatly surprised Han Li.

He now attempted to use the magic technique on this girl, and as expected, he succeeded.

After taking a cautious glance in every direction, he softly extended his finger, and a small ball of milky white light emerged on his finger tip. Pressed against the maid's head, the ball of light soon entered her forehead and disappeared.

The young maid woke up and immediately stood. She blankly looked at Han Li without speaking.

"What is the background of your chief steward? When did he enter the Prince's residence? Where does he often like to go? Who does he often meet with outside the Prince's residence?" Han Li looked at the young maid and rapidly shot out a series of questions.

He started off with this maid, the one dispatched by Prince Xin to find the young prince at the start of the banquet. It seemed the status of this servant wasn't low. If he used her, Han Li might actually obtain a bit of reliable information.

"Which chief steward is Master asking about?" The young maid asked with an expressionless face.

“The Prince’s residence has more than one chief steward?” Puzzled, Han Li asked with slight surprise.

“The residence has many chief stewards in charge of taking care of the Prince’s affairs. For example, there is Chief Steward Li, who is in charge of making purchases, and Chief Steward Di, who is in charge of supervising the residence.” The young maid continued with blank eyes.

“Which chief steward was greeting guests at the residence’s gate?” Han Li softly asked after wrinkling his brow.

“That is Chief Steward Wang; he has the greatest authority.”

“He is the one I am referring to!” Han Li added with a bit of anxiety.

He didn’t know how long he could use this magic technique to control her mind. Naturally, he had to hurry and ask about the important matters first. Otherwise, he would have to waste more effort after the young maid awakened.

“According to the seniors in the residence, Chief Steward Wang grew up together with the Prince and accompanied him during his education. He eventually followed the prince for fifty to sixty years. Apart from a routine monthly trip in which he follows the Prince into the forbidden city, he normally doesn’t leave the Prince’s residence and won’t contact anybody outside. If he did meet anyone, it would be among the Prince’s good friends.”

“As for his relationship with the young prince, it’s a bit strange! I’ve heard from the young prince’s previous wet nurse that ten years ago, the young prince used to have a very violent temperament, and his relationship with Chief Steward Wang was anything but good. He even slapped Chief Steward Wang in public before. But throughout the past ten years, the young prince’s entire attitude changed dramatically. Not only did he become polite and refined, but he also became extremely respectful towards Chief Steward Wang, even holding a ceremony to become his Junior. Prince Xin was greatly pleased by this, claiming that they had the gods’ blessings all along,” the young girl flatly said.

When Han Li heard this, his expression didn’t change. He coldly smiled in his heart.

Although it sounded like this Chief Steward Wang didn’t seem suspicious in the least, the exceptional change in the young prince’s character was enough for Han Li to be certain there was some sort of hidden relationship between the two.

In addition, for these two to cause a Foundation Establishment cultivator to feel danger, they certainly weren’t common mortals.

As for the steward’s mysterious background, Han LI didn’t feel like investigating it too deeply.

He only wanted to make sure the chief steward wasn’t from the Devil Dao. He didn’t care whether the other party was righteous or evil or whatever secrets he held.

If he could do less, Han Li naturally wouldn't go asking for trouble.

After this interrogation, Han Li figured it was most likely that the young prince and the chief steward had no relationship with the Devil Dao.

After all, the young prince had been exceptional from the beginning; there hadn't been a sudden change in ability. If the Devil Dao truly started setting this up over ten years ago, Han Li could only remain speechless.

With this thought, Han Li sighed and commanded, "Where does Immortal Master Wu live? Lead me there."

"As you wish, Master!"

The young maid obediently stood and walked. Han Li secretly followed her while continuing to conceal himself.

With the young girl's guidance, Han Li passed through seven to eight large courtyards and arrived at a peaceful terrace. At that moment, the young girl then stopped.

Pa! Pa!

Suddenly, Han Li lightly patted the maid's back two times using a palm filled with white light. Afterwards, his figure flashed and shot behind a large tree.

“Yi! Isn’t this the venerable Immortal Master’s residence? What am I doing here?”

The young maid then blinked two times with all her strength and suddenly yelped. The blankness in her eyes could no longer be seen.

“Who is causing a commotion outside? Didn’t this humble Daoist instruct not to let people come here and disturb his cultivation?!”

The old Daoist Priest’s annoyed voice came from a room in the courtyard.

When the young maid heard this, her face immediately turned white from fear. Without thinking about why she appeared at this location, she ran away, flustered.

Creak. The door opened.

With the appearance of stereotypical Daoist Immortal, the old white-haired Daoist walked out.

But after he saw there was nobody in the courtyard, his face revealed a sense of confusion.

“What’s going on! I clearly heard someone talking. I thought the prince had come to find me! Where did the unpleasant person who

interrupted my cultivation run off to?”

The old man stood in the courtyard and looked in every direction before furiously returning to his room.

After he shut his door and faced the room, however, he was completely dumbfounded!

He only saw Han Li sitting at the table, silently looking at the old Daoist with a beaming smile. He appeared to hold great interest in him.

“Who are you?” The old Daoist quickly asked as his expression dramatically changed.

He then reflexively raised his hand and summoned a fireball.

“What I want is you. Don’t worry, I won’t act against you so casually.” Han Li smiled speaking as if hadn’t seen the old Daoist’s fireball. His words didn’t hold the slightest bit of hostility.

Chapter 294: Flame Handling Arts

“Humph! Your esteemed self infiltrated this room with great stealth, yet you still dare to mystify yourself! See if this humble Daoist doesn’t...” The old Daoist had long been accustomed to flattery from his recent days in the Prince’s residence and instinctively reacted, yelling with a stern voice.

However, after he used the Heaven’s Eye Technique to look at Han Li, his originally furious face immediately became frozen and turned white soon after.

“Your... your esteemed self is a Foundation Establishment Senior?”

The old man stuttered, unwilling to believe it.

“Didn’t you already determine that with your magic technique?” Han Li indifferently said this with a controlled smile on his face.

“Senior do not blame me! This Junior had never seen a Senior who had cultivated to Foundation Establishment before. The highest I have seen were Qi Condensation cultivators of the eleventh or twelfth layer. I was truly incapable of judging Senior’s cultivation! I only knew that Senior’s cultivation is unfathomably deep!” When the old Daoist heard him, he hastily extinguished his fireball as if he had woken from a dream. He stepped forward with a salute and repeatedly explained with a careful, apologetic smile on his face.

Han Li was surprised that the old Daoist hadn't exposed fear like the old man Xiao had. Instead, he faintly revealed a sense of excitement.

But after some thought, Han Li clearly understood the other party's thoughts.

This white-haired old Daoist was part the prime of his life but still lingering at the sixth layer. He was most likely a rogue cultivator with extremely poor aptitude. As such, he was unable to meet cultivators with profound magic power. Even if he weren't a rogue cultivator, he only interacted with Daoist brothers with cultivation bases similar to his own.

Now that he saw such a high-level cultivator, he naturally regarded it as such a fortuitous encounter that was hard to come by. He mostly likely planned to fish up some benefits.

Having thought this, Han Li couldn't help but smile. If the other party was able to satisfy him, he wouldn't mind giving him a few benefits.

Han Li immediately turned his gaze to the old Daoist and leisurely said, "Your guess is correct. I really am a Foundation Establishment cultivator!"

When the old white-haired Daoist heard Han Li's words, his expression became even more respectful. Naturally, the happiness in his eyes grew a bit stronger as well.

“I don’t know why Senior suddenly appeared here. Does Senior wish to command this Junior to take care of a certain matter?” the old Daoist respectfully asked.

This person was on the right track. He knew that if he wanted to receive a few benefits from Han Li, he naturally had to do something in return.

When Han Li heard this, he expressed satisfaction, and with a faint smile, he said, “First let's talk about your origins. Today I saw your show at the Prince’s residence. Your fire-controlling technique was quite good!” Han Li gave a minor praise, but little did the Daoist know that it was actually sincere!

When the old Daoist heard Han Li’s words, an astonished expression flashed across his face.

He hadn’t thought that this Senior had seen his performance. He hastily replied with a humble tone, “It’s unfortunate that Senior had seen my poor performance! Junior only manipulated the flame technique. I would have taken something else out to show, but my other techniques are a mess! As for this Junior’s origins, it isn’t anything notable. When Junior was young, he unexpectedly obtained the 《Fierce Yang Arts》 from a cultivator on death’s door. It was at this moment that he entered the world of cultivation. However, it was unfortunate that Junior’s aptitude was too poor, and without any guidance, he could only barely cultivate to the sixth layer.”

“Your fire controlling technique was a cultivation technique from that book?” Han Li’s interest was stirred, and he asked this

soon after.

“It isn’t. This fire controlling technique was something Junior had cultivated until he reached a bottleneck. Without any method to progress, he could only grudgingly polish and refine some small tricks. But after several tens of years of improvements and modifications, it has become Junior’s greatest accomplishment.”

“It was something you researched on your own?” Han Li was inwardly startled. He further examined the old white-haired man several more times, revealing a bit of amazement.

“That’s right, Senior! Junior took this meager magic of his and turned it into a book, the 《Flame Handling Arts》. If it isn’t beneath Senior, Junior can take it out and give a pointer or two!” The old Daoist saw that Han Li seemed interested in his fire control technique and was struck with inspiration. He hastily took out a thin book from his storage pouch and respectfully handed it to Han Li.

When Han Li saw this, he was slightly startled!

Truthfully speaking, although Han Li felt that this flame transformation technique was quite strange, he didn’t feel a great desire to obtain this technique.

He didn’t think that this small fire controlling technique would be of great use to his current self!

However, the old Daoist took the initiative to show it to him and caused him to feel surprised. Han Li easily received it and took a moment to browse through its contents.

At the start, Han Li perused the book with an indifferent attitude.

But as he looked through it, although his expression was as peaceful as ever, he gradually became shocked in his heart!

The minor knack of flame shape transformation mentioned at the start of the book held no great meaning to the current Han Li. It was merely flashy but hollow inside. But towards the end, the old Daoist mentioned a few vague concepts regarding flexibly applying magic techniques and some feasible practice methods. This caused Han Li to feel a sudden flash of insight and benefiting him in no small amount!

After a short moment, Han Li gently closed the book.

Now was not the time to research cultivation techniques. When he had free time, he would properly analyze the contents of this book!

He was confident that this meeting increased his understanding and usage of magic techniques by a whole level.

“This book, I will take it! I know that although you said would give me a pointer of two, I truly want this book to be gifted to me.

As a Senior, I naturally won't leave you empty-handed. I have a few books on Daoist magic, magic tools of every rank, and even a few medicine pills of great use to a Qi Condensation cultivator. You can choose one from the three options in exchange for this book. I'll give you the time it takes to make a cup of tea to come to a decision."

After Han Li took a deep look at the old Daoist, he said a few words that unceasingly excited the old man.

"Many thanks, Senior! Many thanks for Senior's favor!" The old white-haired Daoist's complexion flushed red. He even trembled a bit from excitement.

Han Li faintly smiled and didn't say anything else. Instead, he closed his eyes, leaned against the chair, and rested.

The old Daoist started to anxiously pace in circles around the room, finding it extremely difficult to choose one over another.

"How is it? Have you made up your mind?"

After a moment passed, Han Li felt it was about time. He serenely asked this after having opened his eyes.

"Senior, I've decided. Junior only wants medicinal pills that will allow Qi Condensation cultivators to make a breakthrough." After Han Li's inquiry, the old Daoist eventually came to a decision and said this with certainty.

When Han Li heard this, he didn't reveal the slightest of surprise. He reckoned that the other party would choose medicinal pills. After all, magic tools and Daoist books could be acquired after he made cultivation breakthroughs.

Thus, after giving a light nod, Han Li brushed his gown sleeve against the table and left behind two small jade bottles.

“These two bottles contain Yellow Dragon Pills. They are substantially effective on cultivators up to the tenth layer. Take them!” Han Li calmly said.

“Tenth layer of Qi Condensation... Many thanks for Senior's great favor! Many thanks...” The old Daoist looked at those two bottles of medicinal pills with a fiery gaze. After repeatedly expressing his thanks, he excitedly took the two bottles into his hands.

He then impatiently opened the lid of the bottle. and after sniffing it two times, he had a completely satisfied appearance.

“I actually came to find you for another matter. After performing a task, I will naturally give you even more compensation!” After Han Li saw the other party carefully put away the medicine bottles, he calmly talked about the main reasons he came there.

With the heavy reward attached, Han Li was confident the other party would be tempted.

As a result, the old Daoist immediately beamed with joy after hearing this and said, “Senior, please do not hesitate to tell me of this matter. Junior will carry it out by any means!”

When Han Li heard this, he faintly smiled and responded, “It’s nothing major. For the next few months, I want you to pay attention to the whereabouts of your disciple, the young prince, and Chief Steward Wang. If anything abnormal happens, all you have to do is tell me!”

Although Han Li deemphasized the matter, when the old Daoist heard this, he was stunned.

He truly didn’t think that this Senior would want him to monitor two mortals. Furthermore, one of them would be the beloved disciple he had just accepted.

Having remained perplexed despite much thought, the old Daoist took a careful at Han Li and asked with a probing tone, “Could Senior please illuminate this Junior? Could it be there is something amiss with these two?”

The old Daoist asked this very carefully, fearing he would offend this expert.

Han Li’s face didn’t show the slightest dissatisfaction. He didn’t immediately reply to the cultivator’s question. After a moment of deliberation, he said in a soft voice, “In truth, I am a cultivator from Yellow Maple Valley of the seven sects. The Devil Dao is

currently invading our State of Yue; even a rogue cultivator like you should be aware of this! I suspect that these two have a relationship with the Devil Dao. Thus, I need to have someone help me pay attention to their whereabouts, just in case!”

Although Han Li believed Chief Steward Wang and the young prince weren’t associated with the Devil Dao, it was better to be careful. He was unclear with about certain details of their background and felt in his heart that there was something greatly concerning about them. Thus, he sought this old Daoist in advance to monitor the pair’s actions.

However, he didn’t directly mention any of his actual concerns to the old Daoist and simply mentioned the Devil Dao as a convenient excuse.

After all, the feeling of danger that Han Li perceived from the two was purely instinctive, so he obviously couldn’t say this out loud.

Chapter 295: Keeping An Appointment

“A relationship with the Devil Dao?”

When the old Daoist heard that Han Li was a Yellow Maple Valley cultivator, he didn't show any surprise. This was a matter he had previously guessed. Apart from the seven sects, cultivators at Foundation Establishment were truly too few. However, when he heard that his own disciple and Chief Steward Wang were possibly implicated with the Devil Dao, his face immediately became green.

The reputation of the Devil Dao in the State of Yue was nearly synonymous with bloodshed and ruthlessness. A small Qi Condensation cultivator such as the old Daoist naturally knew of this.

“Senior misunderstands! I truly examined that young prince's body. He doesn't possess the slightest magic power.” After a moment of apprehensive and careful thought, he found this hard to believe.

After all, he had spent some time with the young prince and truly hadn't been able to observe anything similar to the rumors of the Devil Dao.

After Han Li heard his words, he didn't respond with any superfluous words. He simply said this with a serene expression, “As for whether these two are with the Devil Dao, you will personally pay attention to this in the future. If you discover anything abnormal, you don't need me to explain this further. I

don't require you take any harmful actions towards to two. You simply have to keep an eye on the two. Additionally, you mustn't by any means perform any probing actions. If the other party realizes that you understood their identities, it's likely your life will be forfeit!"

Han Li's final words were a warning to the old Daoist.

The doubt in the eyes of the old white-haired Daoist immediately disappeared after hearing Han Li's words. Moreover, he now had a terrified appearance.

After some slight hesitation, he opened his mouth and said with slight fear, "If by chance these two discover that I'm monitoring them, what should I do! This humble Daoist's magic power is meager. I truly fear I will have to turn down Senior's great task!"

Having heard this, Han Li wrinkled his brow.

This old Daoist appeared to change his mind and wanted to give this up, but this wouldn't do. It seemed Han Li would have to give him a few more benefits.

With this thought, Han Li touched his storage pouch and took out an item, lightly placing it on the table.

"Monitor the two. If there are any dangers, I will give you this high-grade magic tool to defend yourself with. After this matter has ended, this magic tool will officially become your own." Han Li

insipidly said to the old Daoist as he pointed to the purple bead emitting a faint radiance on the table.

“High-grade magic tool!” When the old Daoist heard this, his mind immediately shook.

Normally, he would be pathetically short on money. He wouldn’t have enough money to afford a mid-grade magic tool, let alone a high-grade magic tool!

“This purple light bead will immediately create a barrier of light to protect your body after you pour magic power into it. I’m confident there aren’t many Qi Condensation cultivators that will be able to break through it. This should be enough to cope with most of the dangers you’ll face.” Han Li patiently said with an unchanging expression.

“This is a defensive magic tool?” After hearing its introduction, the old Daoist’s eyes became passionate.

Defensive magic tools were the most precious and rare kind of magic tool. If this old Daoist were to spend the rest of his years gathering spirit stones, it was likely he still wouldn’t have enough to buy a high-grade defensive magic tool.

“Alright, this old Daoist will spare no effort to complete this task.” After the old white-haired Daoist’s face calmed down, he finally clenched his teeth and agreed.

It seemed the proverb “Birds die in pursuit of food, men die in pursuit of money” applied to the cultivation world as well!

When Han Li saw the old Daoist agree to take on this greatly dangerous task, although his face revealed a smile, he inwardly sighed.

“Place this spiritual mark on your body. That way, if anything happens, I can immediately come find you and perhaps save your life! Additionally, I will reward you with an additional bottle of Yellow Dragon Pills after this matter ends.” By using this method and placing the spiritual mark on the old Daoist’s body, Han Li was using both force and incentive.

After the old Daoist saw Han Li do this, he was slightly startled, but he feigned ignorance of Han Li’s true intent and repeatedly expressed his thanks.

Seeing the old Daoist being tactful, Han Li couldn’t help but smile as he took his leave. Then after the old Daoist respectfully sent him off, he quietly departed from the Prince’s residence.

Han Li didn’t intend to immediately return to the Qin Residence. Instead, he casually found a teahouse and calmly contemplated as he tasted the tea. He started to mull over the recent affairs that had occurred to see whether or not there were anything he had done inappropriately or overlooked.

He regularly examined and reflected on all his previous affairs, a habit that Han Li had acquired over the years. Only by

continuously reducing his own failings and making up for his deficiencies would Han Li be able to come out unscathed from the crises of the cultivation world at every step.

Thus, Han Li sat at the teahouse for a long while. When the sky had gradually begun to darken, he left the teahouse under a waiter's strange gaze.

He only called for a single pot of tea and spent half a day drinking it. This was the first time the waiter had seen such a customer. He would later become unable to help but mention this to his friends, causing Han Li to be the unexpected butt of a few mortals' jokes. The unfortunate Han Li would forever remain oblivious to this loss of face.

...

The agreed time by which he would meet old man Xiao had not yet arrived. However, Han Li never intended to truly arrive at the appointed time.

Even though he was always one to be punctual, it was better to arrive early and prevent them from playing any tricks on him.

After walking for a moment, Han Li suddenly wrinkled his brow.

He felt the marks of the Xiao grandparent-grandchild pair appear in the west when they should've been in the east as agreed, causing Han Li to feel a bit angry.

With a cold snort, Han Li took advantage of the lack of spectators and threw his Divine Wind Boat to the sky. He and the boat turned into a streak of white light that rushed through the sky in the pair's direction.

The magic technique for using Spiritual Qi to track people was a very common method used by Foundation Establishment cultivators. However, most people could only sense the marker from a few tens of kilometers away. Han Li, on the other hand, practiced the Great Development Technique and could faintly track it down from over fifty kilometers away, a feat that was truly astonishing.

This caused Han Li to greatly look forward to practicing the second layer of the Great Development Technique!

After a moment, Han Li stood on the Divine Wind Boat and coldly looked down at an unremarkable courtyard that was about a hundred meters wide. There were three small, half-worn rooms in the courtyard.

Standing on the small pure white jade-like boat, Han Li didn't recklessly descend. Instead, he remained calm and silent as if he were thinking about something.

In the end, Han Li took a light step, and the small boat immediately fell from the sky like a shooting star.

But when he was about fifteen meters away from the floor, the

magic tool suddenly came to a stop. Han Li's body moved, and he lightly stepped off the magic tool and landed in the small courtyard. At the same time, he beckoned toward the sky. In response, the small boat shrank and flew into Han Li's hand.

This series of events was as smooth and nimble as flowing water; the slightest of noise couldn't be heard.

Then, like a demon, he stood in front of the middle room and calmly probed the room for activity with his spiritual sense.

Han Li clearly felt that within the room, there were two masses of Spiritual Qi faintly accompanied by traces of his own Spiritual Qi.

As expected, after Han Li's spiritual sense entered the room, he clearly heard a young woman's voice.

"Grandpa, aren't our actions going to anger him? If that person truly finds us, will the excuses we prepared work?" The young girl's voice was filled with worry. It seemed that Han Li had left a deep and powerful impression on her.

"Humph! You foolish girl. How could he actually find us relying on just a bit of Spiritual Qi? Your grandpa ate more hardships than you ate meals. Threats, deliberately menacing words, your grandpa has seen them all! I am not convinced his words were true. Furthermore, even if he can activate the magic technique, since we are separated by such a far distance, that Foundation Establishment cultivator won't be able to accurately sense us. If he

goes to the east district, then this person will truly have to go search for us.” After a cold snort, the old man chided the young girl.

“Since it is like that, why didn’t we leave Yuejing during the night? All we did was move to the west district,” the young girl retorted, unconvinced.

“You still don’t understand? What I said earlier was only your grandpa’s guess! As to whether or not it’s true, that is unclear. If I guessed correctly, naturally we won’t have to face his threats and we’ll be free to leave to a different place. But he is nonetheless a Foundation Establishment cultivator. Perhaps he will be able to trace us from afar with his magic technique. If we ran away from Yuejing and he found us, we would have no excuses. But moving to the west district isn’t the same as running away, so we can just casually use an excuse to explain ourselves.” The old man doted on this young girl very much, so he gave her a detailed explanation.

“Hehe! Grandpa, you are truly cunning! However, I don’t think that person seems to be of the despicable sort. Is it necessary for us to hide from him? According to my thoughts, wouldn’t simply exchanging the Daoist book with him give us great benefits?! In any case, this Daoist book is far too profound for us to understand it.” The young girl giggled and said this without care.

“Humph! The world is dangerous. That is just wishful thinking! By conventional morals, everyone would honorably trade openly, and there would be no reason to scheme. You have yet to realize that for fair dealings to exist, they require both sides to have similar strengths. If one side is strong and one side is weak, how

can that be considered fair?”

“Besides, although that Daoist book is of no value to us, it could perhaps be a treasure in his hands. After possessing the treasure, he might immediately exterminate us. Your grandpa has seen this on many occasions throughout his life! How could I possibly trust him? After all, the difference in cultivation between him and us is far too great. He could exterminate without expending the slightest of strength.” As the old man said this, his voice became darker. It was clear he was helpless against the reality that his life was in someone else’s hands.

“Grandpa, don’t be discouraged! Didn’t you say that although that person appears young, he’s likely an old monster that lived an unknown number of years?” When the young girl saw this, she hastily consoled him.

But at this moment, a cold voice from their most feared person suddenly came from outside the room.

“What? How am I anything like an old monster?”

As the complexion of the grandparent-grandchild pair greatly changed, the originally tightly closed door silently opened and gave way to Han Li, who calmly walked in.

After he entered the room, Han Li bluntly sat in the host’s seat and then wordlessly looked at the two with an extremely calm expression.

Chapter 296: Formal Apprenticeship

“What, old monster? Nobody said those words!” With a greatly changed complexion, the young girl pushed this forward with a strong smile and hastily lowered her head, not daring to meet his gaze.

Han Li chuckled and didn't bother with the young lady. Instead, he coldly looked at the old man.

The old man appeared to have lost his head from fear.

He truly didn't know how much Han Li heard from the previous conversation, so he couldn't help but inwardly complain without end. Now he didn't dare to speak his originally prepared excuse.

“I didn't think that Senior would arrive so quickly! This Junior believed Senior would arrive in a few hours at the very least! Let Junior take out that book for Senior.”

Without a choice, the old man could only cope with all his might against Han Li's unfriendly appearance. In a quick-witted move, he immediately mentioned the Daoist book in hopes that he could calm Han Li's anger.

“Fine, take it out!” After staring at the old man with a sword-like gaze, Han Li eventually said this with a cold tone.

This caused the old man to recover his wits. It seemed the other

party wouldn't immediately vent his anger.

The old man hastily agreed and walked to the neighboring room. When the young girl saw this, she moved her legs, also wanting to follow the old man, but the old man stopped her with his gaze.

What kind of joke was this!

If both people went to the neighboring room, then wouldn't they be deliberately angering the other party! It would cause Han Li to believe they were thinking of playing some sort of trick. The old man completely threw these impractical thoughts out, fearing Han Li would have a misunderstanding.

The young girl could only remain in the room with a pout. She stood silently in her original place, keeping Han Li company.

The old man's movements were very quick. In the blink of an eye, he walked over with a shabby wooden box that seemed to contain the Daoist book.

"Senior, the Qi restraining cultivation technique we use as well as the other teachings of the books are within. Please take a look and see whether it has any use to Senior." The old man walked several steps toward Han Li and proclaimed this with a respectful appearance. He gently opened the wooden box, revealing a slightly blackened yellow leather book, and handed it over to Han Li.

From a look, one could tell this book came from an ancient era!

Han Li narrowed his eyes, and after looking at the book in the old man's hands several times, he nodded his head and received it.

Although this book had changed color due to the passing of time, when Han Li touched the cover, it felt exquisitely smooth. Furthermore, it seemed extremely durable.

It appeared that this book wasn't made from common materials and was instead made from the hide of some sort of demonic beast. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been able to remain intact for such a long time.

Han Li lightly stroked the book for a moment, and after muttering to himself, he slowly flipped a page.

After a few general looks, Han Li wrinkled his brow.

When he opened this book, extremely unfamiliar and ancient characters entered his view. Han Li was certain he didn't recognize the marking of these characters. He also hadn't seen such markings from the collection at Yellow Maple Valley.

Although he didn't recognize them, Han Li didn't waste his time, and he quickly turned through the pages.

In the last two pages of the book, he discovered a set of nameless chants that appeared to have been added by someone. The characters used in this set of incantations were ancient characters

more commonly used in the cultivation world, allowing him to easily read them.

Han Li knew in his heart that this was the Qi restraining cultivation technique, so he took the liberty to analyze it.

After the time it took to eat a meal, Han Li slowly closed the book, and his face wore a thoughtful expression.

Putong. Putong. The old man to the side felt his heart violently beat, but he didn't dare to breath loudly. He knew this moment would decide the lives of him and his granddaughter since Han Li would be revealing how he intended to treat the two of them.

Han Li didn't pay attention to the old man's inwardly nervous attitude. Instead, he calmly took out a jade box from his storage pouch and properly put the book inside.

Then, he turned his face towards the old man and said indifferently, "I will take this book. Tell me right now what items you two want in exchange for it. No matter what, I will fulfill your requests to the best of my ability!"

Han Li's voice wasn't loud, but when the old man and the young girl heard those words, it was as if they heard the sweet sounds of nature.

At this moment, the two knew that not only were their lives saved, but there were also benefits to be had. They couldn't help

but reveal pleasant surprise!

“Senior, could you let us discuss it for a bit?” Now that the crisis had passed, the old man couldn’t help but want to maximize the benefits from this exchange and immediately asked Han Li with a smile.

Before Han Li arrived, the pair had been afraid they would be exterminated absolutely without any items being exchanged.

But now that they heard Han Li’s question, they were naturally caught unprepared!

Furthermore, now that he realized Han Li wasn’t a merciless, nasty character, the old man gathered the courage to ask that question.

“Do as you wish. But you mustn’t take too long!”

Because Han Li had acquired a set of very useful secret arts and a mysterious ancient book, he was in a good mood. He allowed them this chance to talk without paying much mind.

“Many thanks for Senior’s great favor! We will only take a short among of time,” the old man exclaimed with great joy.

He immediately brought the young woman outside the room, and the two started to mutter in soft voices.

When Han Li saw this, he faintly smiled.

Although he could easily exterminate the two, Han Li wasn't such an evil and pointlessly vicious character. If he didn't need to, he wouldn't go back on his word.

After a short moment, the old man and the young woman walked over with strange expressions on their faces, as if they were a bit worried.

When Han Li saw them, he was a bit puzzled, but he still asked, "You two have decided?"

"Senior, we have finished discussing. This one's granddaughter doesn't want any worldly possessions. Instead, we wish for Senior to fulfill our bold request!" After a moment of hesitation, he said this with clenched teeth, slightly surprisingly Han Li.

"What's this request?" Han Li wrinkled his brow and unhurriedly asked.

He didn't know why, but at this moment, Han Li suddenly had a feeling that something troublesome was going to happen to him.

After some more hesitation, the old man revealed a helpless expression and continued vaguely:

“A... Actually, this one’s granddaughter greatly admires Senior’s deep and profound cultivation and techniques. She w... wishes to become Senior’s disciple and is willing to serve as Senior’s attendant. As the sincere wish of this small old man and his granddaughter, we hope Senior will be able to take her as a disciple.”

Just as the old man finished stuttering these words, the clever young girl immediately paid her respects in front of Han Li and kowtowed, knocking her head loudly on the floor. Han Li simply had not predicted this would happen; after a moment of great surprise, he didn’t know whether he should laugh or cry.

To have him accept a disciple, was this a joke? He was still trembling from fear in face of the cultivation world and was never sure whether he’d be able to defend himself. Now he had to bring something to weigh him down?!

He certainly couldn’t agree to this matter!

Regardless, Han Li had to return to the main topic on hand. He could tell that the girl’s aptitude shouldn’t be poor, even if he hadn’t carefully examined it yet. Otherwise, she shouldn’t have been able to reach the sixth layer at such a young age. When Han Li was at that age, the only reason he had reached that stage was because he had the assistance of an insane amount of medicine pills.

From this, it would be a pity for this young girl to spend her life muddling through starting line of the cultivation world. Although he couldn’t take this young girl as a disciple, he could still

introduce her to a master. He actually found the rare mischievous streak in her quite agreeable.

He clearly remembered that the small old man, Senior Martial Brother Ma, had yet to take in a disciple.

Furthermore, Senior Martial Brother Ma had once angrily complained that ever since Han Li left the Hundred Medicine Garden, the old man had to personally look after the medicine garden when he could otherwise be taking care of more important tasks. Had the small old man known Han Li would leave the garden, he would've taken in an obedient disciple.

This young girl before him appeared exceptionally intelligent. If her aptitude truly wasn't lacking, then there was no harm in introducing her to Senior Martial Brother Ma as a potential disciple. As for whether Senior Martial Brother Ma would be satisfied in taking in this young girl as a disciple, that had nothing to do with Han Li.

With this thought, Han Li revealed a thoughtful appearance and caused the old man and the young girl to believe he was truly thinking of whether to accept her as a disciple, leaving them with excitement.

"Come over here. Let me look at your spiritual roots." After some contemplation, Han Li waved to the girl and calmly said this.

"Yes, Senior!"

The girl appeared extremely clever, and after respectfully answering, she nimbly walked in front of Han Li and took the initiative to hand over her slender, flawless white wrist, revealing a slight bit of shyness.

Han Li lightly grabbed the young girl's jade wrist with his right hand and started to slowly circulate Spiritual Qi throughout her body. Not long after, he let go.

“Dual spiritual roots, truly good aptitude!” Han Li muttered as he stared at the young girl's face.

When the young woman and the old man heard Han Li's words, joy bubbled up from their faces and they believed that Han Li was about to accept her.

But Han Li continued, suddenly saying, “Unfortunately, I don't take disciples! Otherwise, with your aptitude, I would definitely have accepted you.”

Han Li's words caused the grandparent-grandchild pair to feel as if cold water was being poured over their heads. They couldn't help but blankly stare.

Chapter 297: The Breaking Of Bad News

When Han Li saw the young girl's disappointed expression, he suddenly smiled and gently said, "Although I can't accept you as a disciple, do not lose heart! I can introduce you to my Foundation Establishment Senior Martial Brother, a potential master. However, whether or not you can become his disciple all depends on my Senior Martial Brother. Is this to your satisfaction?"

"Really?" The young girl's original look of disappointment vanished. When she heard those words, her spirit immediately shook.

Without speaking further, Han Li took out a sound transmission talisman and lightly mumbled a few sentences into the talisman. Then he handed it to the young girl along with a jade medallion.

"Take this talisman and this jade medallion. Bring these with you to Yellow Maple Valley and find a Senior surnamed Ma. At that time, whether or not he will accept you as a disciple will depend on your luck," Han Li added with an indifferent expression.

The girl didn't expect that even though Han Li was unwilling to take her in as a disciple, he would give her another opportunity. With her wish once again ignited, she hastily saluted Han Li and expressed her thanks. The old man was equivalently in high spirits.

"Because I'm uncertain whether he will accept you as his disciple, I will also give you two high-grade magic tools. This could also be

regarded as compensation for that Daoist book of yours.”

While Han Li was saying this, he took out an embroidered emerald-green silk cloth and a small blue sword, casually handing them over to the old man.

When the old man saw this, he appeared pleasantly surprised.

He originally believed that having Han Li introduce the young girl to a master was quite a good fortune, but he hadn't thought that Han Li would bestow even more substantial benefits. He couldn't help but feel extremely grateful.

The old man hurriedly expressed his thanks once more and respectfully took the magic tools, revealing an extremely content expression.

He had cultivated for so many years, yet he only had one high-grade magic tool on hand. Now that he acquired two more, how could he not be satisfied?

Han Li did not stay for long, but before he left, he casually withdrew the Spiritual Qi he had placed on the pair's bodies. Under their respectful gazes, Han Li flew off and departed.

After they saw Han Li fly far away, the old man handed the embroidered silk to the young girl and kept the small sword as he roared with laughter. Then they made preparations to leave the next day and go find that Senior Ma at Yellow Maple Valley in

order to see whether or not his granddaughter could become a disciple of the Seven Sects.

However, old man Xiao was a bit puzzled as to why Han Li was mixed among the Qin Clan. Those people were genuine mortals!

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Not knowing old man Xiao had let his imagination run wild, Han Li rushed back to the Qin Residence with joyful anticipation.

Because he used his magic tool to simply descend into his own dwelling, his return hadn't aroused anyone's attention. He then returned to his room without anyone knowing.

Sensing that this newly acquired set of Qi restraining incantations was quite practical, he opened the ancient book to cultivate it that night.

The incantation was a minor skill that used a bit of spiritual power. With the support of Han Li's profound magic power, he had no difficulty grasping it.

After one night, he almost completely grasped it.

On the morning of the next day, just as Han Li finished his Qi refinement meditation and felt that his luck was quite good, he suddenly heard a smothered "Bang" from within his storage pouch. It seemed that something had broke.

Han Li's expression immediately became very unsightly and gloomy. After a moment, he reached out for his storage pouch and took out a violet bead. It was actually exactly the same magic tool he gave the old Daoist. However, the bead's sparkling and glossy appearance was split with several deep cracks.

After a moment of silence, Han Li suddenly walked out of the room, and after checking that no one was in the courtyard, he immediately took out his Divine Wind Boat. With a flash, he boarded the small boat and silently disappeared from the Qin Residence.

After a quarter hour, Han Li appeared at a small village outside Yuejing. With a still expression, he surveyed the village and its surroundings from the sky as if he were looking for something.

Eventually, at some remote hills several kilometers away from the village, Han Li stepped off the small boat and stared unwaveringly at a huge poplar tree.

After a long while, Han Li's hands formed a magic incantation as he softly spat out the word "Retrieve".

From the tree's deeply buried roots, a ball of green light carrying a bead flew out. This bead was a lustrous purple and had several cracks on it. From the size of the cracks, it unexpectedly appeared to be the exact same as the one in Han Li's hand.

Han Li sighed and beckoned the ball of light, causing it to fly

toward his hand.

When it entered his grasp, the ball of light immediately vanished into Han Li's body. Only the bead remained in his hand.

Han Li muttered to himself for a moment before suddenly shooting a fist-sized fireball from his finger towards the roots of the large tree. In an instant, the poplar tree turned to ash and left a large crater in the ground.

Han Li stepped forward and carefully examined it, but he didn't discover anything.

"It's most likely that he was caught up in some evil scheme," Han Li muttered to himself, shaking his head.

Actually, the true name of the "Purple Light Bead" magic tool that he originally chose to give the old Daoist was "Purple Light Response Bead".

These magic tools were refined in pairs. Not only did they release a defensive light barrier, but when one bead's light barriers was broken, so long as the other bead was within five hundred meters, it would suffer the same damage, quite incredibly.

These magic tools were extremely common defensive magic tools carried by Dao Companions of the Six Devil Dao Sects. After several melees on the border of the State of Yue, he had acquired many of these magic tools. Because he felt they were rather

strange, he hadn't sold them.

When he gave the old Daoist this magic tool, it was actually so that if the old Daoist encountered any mishap, Han Li would immediately know.

He absolutely did not think that the old Daoist would use this magic tool after just one night. All of this seemed to point to disaster.

This went far from Han Li's expectations and had caught him rather unprepared!

Han Li motionlessly stood next the hole as if he were contemplating something.

After the time it took to make a cup of tea, Han Li expression seemed to stir. He expressionlessly threw out the Divine Wind Boat and boarded it, flying far off in a streak of white light.

This small overgrown hill seemed to have returned to a state of peace. Apart from the chirping of small birds, it seemed lifeless and still.

“Huuu...”

After an hour, a nearby deep voice exhaled for a while.

Over thirty meters away from the large crater, a person slowly emerged from below a shrub. He was tightly covered in black cloth from head to toe. A pair of dark glossy eyes could be seen as well as a yellow light barrier.

But when this person's entire body came out, the yellow light barrier immediately weakened and soon completely disappeared without a trace.

After this figure emerged, he diligently took a look at the sky in every direction. Then he said with a deep voice, "Come out! He left!"

After this was said, several locations nearby started to shift, and three similarly dressed people emerged along with their own similar yellow light barriers. However, one of the figures appeared to have a thin, woman's stature.

"Eldest Brother, what do we do? We were instructed to capture or kill anyone who came here, but we helplessly let this person go. Won't there be consequences?" A lanky, recently emerged individual couldn't help but anxiously ask this. From his voice, it seemed he was fairly young.

When the person who first emerged heard this, he couldn't help but tremble. He was greatly worried about what the lanky figure had said. They all knew from experience that the ones giving them these orders were vicious.

"It shouldn't be a problem! When they gave us our objective, they

didn't say that the person who would come was a Foundation Establishment cultivator. This is something far beyond our capabilities. If we had acted, we would only be courting death," the "Eldest Brother" said without much confidence.

"Humph! Eldest Brother speaks correctly. How could we subdue a Foundation Establishment cultivator? I also don't trust those people. They truly didn't give us the slightest explanation!" The third individual was the sole female. She said this with dissatisfaction.

After hearing those words, the other three couldn't help but bitterly smile and look at each other in dismay. This little sister of theirs was still so naive even though her life was hanging in the hands of a mysterious enemy. Why would the other party give them an explanation!

"However, it's not that they didn't give us the slightest explanation. I reckon that they just didn't expect there would be such a huge fish. Else, why would they hand this matter over to us? They would have had a Foundation Establishment cultivator assist us at the very least," the last person to emerge said. He had a tall and thin stature.

"That's right. If we give them a clear explanation, we shouldn't be too badly punished!" The person with lanky stature hastily agreed as if his spirits had risen.

But if anybody else heard this, who wouldn't think these words were anything but self-comfort?

“Even so, it is a bit strange. For some reason, I feel like I’ve seen this young Foundation Establishment cultivator before. He seems somewhat familiar!” He softly muttered to himself with a slightly puzzled appearance.

Those words greatly startled the other three.

That girl was especially surprised. Great curiosity flashed through her eyes, wanting to ask further on this matter.

However, the person they referred to as “Eldest Brother” suddenly waved his hand and interrupted, “Enough, we must hurry and leave this place. Let’s leave these matters for later.”

When the woman heard this, she could only swallow her question and nod her head in agreement.

Chapter 298: Captured Alive

“Could you tell this one where you intend to go?”

Without waiting for them to take out their flying magic tools, a cold voice suddenly came from the sky.

This ice cold voice chilled them to the bone, causing this masked group of four to become completely pale from fright. They all cast defensive magic almost simultaneously and then scattered, not daring to turn their head.

About a hundred meters up in the sky, Han Li was standing on his Divine Wind Boat with fluttering clothes. He was expressionlessly looking at them with a gaze containing a ghastly chill.

Their hearts similar sunk as they all thought the same thing. ‘When did this person return? Why didn’t we sense him in the slightest?’

“Scatter!” Their leader, the Eldest Brother, shouted without hesitation.

He then took the initiative to fiercely retreat. At the same time, he threw out a disk magic tool from his bosom and stepped on it, flying away.

The other three scattered in different directions and flew off.

These people clearly understood that they fundamentally couldn't resist a Foundation Establishment cultivator and that it would be better to immediately fly off since their chances of survival would be a bit higher.

The young woman had the weakest magic power among them. Thus, even though she quickly flew on her flying magic tool, she couldn't help but turn her head to look at Han Li in the sky.

As a result, she was surprised by what she saw.

Han Li was standing on the small boat without moving in the slightest. He didn't appear to be taking any actions in pursuing the four. Along with the woman's amazement, she was also secretly delighted to no end, thinking there should be a good chance at escaping unscathed.

But at this moment, she suddenly heard an extremely frigid and sharp hiss come from her front.

With alarm, the woman hastily turned her head around and saw a blinding red arrow of light shoot from the sky, heading aggressively straight toward her.

Aghast, the masked woman raised her hand and threw out an ice spear technique just in time.

When that lustrous ice spear touched the red light, it shattered

into white mist. It was unexpectedly unable to stop the red arrow of light, allowing it strike against the water-attribute barrier protecting her body.

Blue light and red light then filled her vision.

Her body vibrated and was forcibly pushed back by over ten meters, but seeing that her barrier remained intact, the woman sighed deeply from relief.

At this moment, she took a glance in front of her with fright and anger. Could it be the Foundation Establishment cultivator had comrades lying around in ambush for them?

After she clearly saw 'who' was in front of her, this masked girl's black eyes went blank as if she couldn't believe what she saw.

In front of her were two floating soldier figurines dressed in armor. One of them held a large bow and was currently drawing back the bow with a red light arrow. The other one was holding a broad long saber emitting yellow light as it slowly flew toward her.

Although the woman was shocked by the fact that these rigid objects could attack her as true people could, she knew that if she didn't deal with these figurines' attacks, she wouldn't be able to smoothly escape.

With this thought, she clenched her flawless teeth and took out a blue lustrous throwing knife from her storage pouch.

The high-grade magic tool she held in her hand had cost her all of her savings. Normally, she would absolutely hate to use it, but right now she had to urgently escape and didn't have much choice.

“Go!”

The girl softly shouted. That throwing knife then turned into a streak of blue light and shot toward the figurine that was approaching her.

The blue throwing knife arrived in front of the figurine in the blink of an eye, fiercely chopping at its head without the slightest hesitation.

Against the masked woman's expectations, a soft “Dang” sounded out. The figurine had raised its long saber with surprising speed and struck the blue throwing knife before continuing to fly mechanically towards the woman.

The masked woman's expression greatly changed. Pointing to her magic tool, she commanded it to fly out for several meters and loop in a circle, striking the figurine on its return.

But what happened next left her dumbstruck. As if the figurine had eyes behind its head, it struck the magic tool approaching from behind.

This time, the woman was truly panicking!

Just as she thought to come up with something else, a sharp hiss could be heard as the bow figurine shot out an arrow.

With no better option, the masked woman hastily flew to the side, wanting to dodge the arrow.

But much to her surprise, this red streak of light seemed to be manipulated; it mimicked her movements and followed her, catching her off guard. She could only brace for another impact and hope her barrier could hold up once more.

It was at this moment that the saber-wielding figurine finally arrived in front of her and used its long saber to break through her barrier without resistance.

Unwilling to allow the enemy to succeed so smoothly, the masked woman hastily moved to escape.

Thus, the two figurines attacked her from both close range and from a distance. With the cultivation base of the masked woman repeatedly exhausted from her continuous retreats, any kind of escape was out of the question.

But when the sweat-drenched young woman commanded her throwing knife to block the figurine's attack with great difficulty, the figurine that was attacking her in close quarters leaped away from her. At the same time, the archer figurine lowered its bow and no longer attacked.

When the woman saw this, she couldn't help but be shocked. Then she heard a sigh come from behind her, "Sigh! Fifth Sister, you must come back!"

Having heard this, she stopped and then slowly turned around.

She saw three masked men dejectedly standing behind her. Behind each of them were three or four figurines similar to those that were also next to her. Apart from the soldier figurines, there were also actually several tiger beast figurines among them as well.

As young woman swept her gaze past them with an appearance of despair, she was subconsciously compelled to return to her original position.

Her three elder brothers had spiritless gazes as if they were already under control.

The masked woman raised her head to look at Han Li in the sky and sadly tossed her throwing knife magic tool to the floor. She no longer put up any resistance.

When Han Li saw this, he raised his hands with no trace of politeness and sent several streaks of green light burrowing into her body, causing her to feel as if a ghost had possessed her. Her body's true essence became obscure, and she could no longer move as she wished.

With this finished, Han Li didn't make any inquiries. Instead, he waved his hand and pulled them onto the Divine Wind Boat he was sitting on.

He couldn't stay at this place long. If he didn't leave, it was likely he might encounter an expert, which would be greatly problematic.

He randomly chose a direction away from Yuejing. Then, Han Li and the four turned into a streak of white light and flew away.

Not long after, two people appeared where Han Li and the four had been. However, these people's clothes were a concentrated red similar to the color of blood, causing anyone who would've seen it to feel uneasy.

The two took a look around before standing in front of a large hole where the large tree used to be.

After a moment of silence, one of the two suddenly sighed and said, "It seems those five friends from Meng were defeated!"

This person's voice sounded a bit old. Upon hearing it, one would assume the speaker was not young at all.

"Humph, there are no remains! Not only did they fail, they must've also been captured alive. As there isn't the slightest scent of blood here, it seems the newcomer was able to capture those four quite easily." The other person said this with an appearance of

disdain. This person didn't seem old, appearing to be around twenty years old.

“This is a bit troublesome! The five friends of Meng Mountain aren't the useless sort, else their lives wouldn't have been spared and they would have already become blood sacrifices. I suppose they hadn't been overwhelmed by a large number of Qi Condensation and were instead captured by a Foundation Establishment cultivator,” the first person said with a bit of concern.

“What? Are you afraid those people will reveal our secrets? They're only a few cultivators that our school has recruited from nearby. They simply don't know any of our school's secrets. Furthermore, before I sent them on their assignment, I had already activated their seal in secret. They will only live half a day more at most.” The youth lightly laughed and said this without paying any mind.

“Oh! That's good. If it's only half a day more, they won't be able to leak anything. With their bodies having been subjected to the blood incantation restrictions, by the time they discover something is amiss, they will no longer be able to say anything,” the old man said after letting out a breath.

However, the old man changed the subject and said somewhat darkly, “However, why did this happen? Did we not discuss this? We were supposed to turn that old Daoist Wu into our puppet and have him act as your master so that you can slowly show your face in the cultivation world. In this way, our school will be able to carry out our plan and have the core disciples appear in the

cultivation world with an open identity. Why would you suddenly barge into that old Daoist's room and suck in his blood essence? You shouldn't be lacking in any magic power supplements!"

After hearing the old man's words, the masked youth bitterly laughed several times and couldn't help but say, "You think I did it for a supplement? I had no other choice!"

Chapter 299: Harboring Thoughts

“Then why?” The elderly person exclaimed in a low voice, feeling shocked.

“My magic power backlashed, and I desperately needed a cultivator’s blood essence to suppress the true essence in my body. Apart from you, the only nearby cultivator was old Daoist Wu. I can’t use you, can I? Just then, the backlash was truly too vicious; it happened two days earlier than I anticipated, and I was almost unable to suppress it,” the young person said with a bitter laugh; evidently, he was still quite afraid!

“So it’s like that. While it’s not your fault, you will still need to properly explain this matter to the higher ups. But based on my estimation, this may have arisen because you were too hasty in cultivating your Black Fiend Asura Technique. You shouldn’t go to the blood prison to cultivate for now. Instead, take some time to consolidate your foundation before pressing onward!” The elder slowly said this after thinking for a moment.

“Rest assured! After I absorbed that old Daoist’s blood essence, my backlash completely withdrew. So long as I am more careful in the future, no such accidents will again occur. Recently, I have also felt that my cultivation speed has been too rapid, so I myself have been considering not going there again!” the young person indifferently said.

“Good, as long as you know about it. However, although this old Daoist has been exterminated, the person who planted a Spiritual Qi seal in this person is still quite troublesome! You must not

ignore him. After all, it's best to think of a way to not leave any traces behind!

“En, your words sound pretty reasonable! However, I originally believed that anyone who would become friends with old Daoist Wu would also have extremely low cultivation bases. After preparing the trap, I asked those five friends from Meng to set an ambush, but who knew that a big fish would actually appear? Do you think that it was a group of low-layer cultivators or a single Foundation Establishment cultivator who took action?” The young person couldn't resist asking the elderly figure behind him.

“Hehe! Based on my estimation, it was likely a single Foundation Establishment cultivator! After all, even if there were more Qi Condensation cultivators, once those four were set on fleeing, capturing them all at once is not that easily done,” the elderly man with a veiled face said without further thought.

“Since it's like this, shouldn't we temporarily avoid taking risks? When Sect Master comes out from closed-door cultivation, we can continue with some other plan; after all, Foundation Establishment cultivators are not to be lightly provoked!” the young man said with some hesitation upon hearing the other person so casually tossing out the identities of the five friends from Meng Mountain.

“Temporarily avoid? What is there to temporarily avoid? You don't know yet? Sect Master just sent out a notice that he currently requires a few Foundation Establishment cultivators to serve as blood sacrifices. Since this person took the initiative to appear, we shouldn't let this opportunity slip past us so lightly! After all, Qi

Condensation cultivators are numerous and easy to capture, but isolated Foundation Establishment cultivators are extremely rarely seen!” the elderly person said with a cold laugh, his eyes revealing a killing intent.

The young person with a veiled face, upon hearing this, was slightly startled, but afterward, he still spoke somewhat awkwardly:

“But now, apart from the Sect Master’s four great blood servants, our sect doesn’t have any Foundation Establishment level experts here in the capital. They are all in different locations, taking care of various matters; we can’t call them back to the capital just for this, can we?”

“It doesn’t need to be so complicated! Right now, Sect Master desperately needs a Foundation Establishment cultivator; perhaps you could obtain an opportunity to enter Foundation Establishment just like his four great blood servants?” A greedy expression flashed across the eyes of the veiled elderly person.

When the young man heard this, his spirit was shaken, as if he had been completely swayed by the elder’s words.

“Okay, I will go back and prepare! We definitely must capture this person,” he viciously said.

Then, the two of them discussed something in low tones for quite some time before inconspicuously leaving the hills, heading for some unknown location.

Strangely, however, these two people never brought up how they would precisely find Han Li's location in such a large capital. It was as if this was not even an issue to them.

.....

Meanwhile, in a completely deserted area hundreds of kilometers away from the hills, Han Li descended in the Divine Wind Boat, then forced the four people off the magic tool.

Although these four individuals knew that what happened next would not be something good, they simply couldn't stir up any rebellious intent and could only listen obediently to his orders, walking off the small boat.

Han Li, with his hands clasped behind his back, stood in front of the few silent people, coldly sizing them up. After a long while, he opened his mouth and said:

"Take off your veils! At this point, covering your faces is no longer of any use." Han Li's voice was completely void of emotion, causing the four people's figures to tremble briefly before involuntarily glancing at each other.

"Take them off," the Eldest Brother said helplessly.

Seeing this, the other three people could only take off their black veils one by one in a dejected manner, revealing their true,

unconcealed appearances.

After Han Li glanced at their appearances individually, his outward expression did not change, but in his heart, he let out a sigh; as expected, it was those five friends from Meng Mountain.

As he was hovering in midair, listening to these people discussing things, he already felt that their voices were somewhat familiar. Adding on their cultivation method and layers, he naturally connected them to the five friends from Meng Mountain that he had seen just two months ago. All of them were here apart from that forty year-old or so female.

Although these people's identities were exactly the same as he had guessed, Han Li's head still began to hurt incomparably.

Without even thinking, he knew that the young prince in Prince Xin's residence and Chief Steward Wang should be the criminals behind the mass disappearance of cultivators.

He originally intended to do as much as he could to avoid this trouble, but he never expected that this problem would voluntarily come to him. If he had known that it would be this way, he definitely would not have allowed that old Daoist to spy on those two. This was something that had nothing to do with the people from the Devil Dao; rather, he had simply been too careful.

Anyhow, he never expected that old Daoist Wu would actually be that useless; he had only spied on them for a day before being discovered. He had not even been able to protect his life.

This caused Han Li to feel even more depressed and speechless!

If old Daoist Wu's spirit was in the afterlife and he knew that Han Li was complaining about him like this, perhaps he would feel even more wronged! He hadn't even begun to spy on the young prince before the young prince charged into his room and sucked out his blood essence for no reason; his death was truly treated unjustly!

Although Han Li was somewhat wrong about old Daoist Wu's death, he didn't know that the young prince and Chief Steward Wang did not know about Old Daoist Wu's plans to spy on them; even more, they did not know at all that their identities had been revealed to Han Li.

But this didn't affect the fact that both sides had sounded an alarm and were aware of enemies within their midst!

Han Li's thoughts were very heavy at this moment.

After all, of the cultivators who had recently disappeared, a few Foundation Establishment cultivators were also included in that mix. If the opponent that he provoked was extremely frightening, perhaps he would follow in the footsteps of the others who had disappeared if he wasn't careful.

Normally, since this place was so dangerous, he would naturally flee far away; after all, a wise man foresees and mitigates risks! There really was no need for him to fight to the death with this group of people; the further he could get away from this place, the

better.

But what posed him some difficulty was that he still had the mission of protecting the Qin Clan.

If, the people from the Qin Clan were to suffer some misfortune during his absence, he would have no way of accounting for it when he reported to Li Huayuan!

He could not say that he fled because he had felt that Yuejing had suddenly become extremely dangerous.

As Han Li thought this, his expression began to appear indecisive, causing the four hostages in front of him to feel extremely uneasy.

They originally thought that since they had been brought to this place with no one else around, the other person was definitely going to press them for information. However, they didn't expect that this Foundation Establishment youth, after seeing their expressions, would fall into deep thought. His expression became somewhat strange as well. Could he be thinking of some vicious method to torture them?

After making these random guesses, these individuals felt cold sweat forming on their back, and their mental states became even more unsettled.

“How does your esteemed self plan on dealing with us?” the twenty-something year-old young woman suddenly asked,

becoming impatient.

Hearing these words, Han Li recovered from his deep thinking; after glancing at the woman, he coldly said:

“Do I need to deal with you? If I were to hand you over to the families of the missing cultivators and say that you are some of the criminals behind the scenes, I trust that they would treat you very well.”

Han Li spoke these words expressionlessly, causing the four people to have no doubts that Han Li would have no qualms about doing this; they couldn't help but reveal terrified expressions.

“We never kidnapped those cultivators, not even once! We only did a few.....?”

“Stop speaking, Fifth Junior Sister! He is trying to trap you with his words!”

The dark-faced old man suddenly barked out severely, abruptly interrupting the woman's next words. This caused Fifth Junior Sister's heart to feel shocked, and she couldn't help but viciously glare at Han Li.

“Set a trap for you with my words? You regard yourselves too highly!” Han Li indifferently chuckled, a mocking expression on his lips.

Chapter 300: Blood Curse

"Hmph! As our senior, you have no need to humiliate us in this way. If you have any methods to torture us with, just use them!" The tall, skinny Second Brother of the Five Friends from Meng Mountain suddenly yelled at Han Li; he did not seem to be afraid that his life hung in Han Li's hands.

This greatly shocked the other three! In their hearts, this second eldest brother was someone who would think before acting; he was not an impulsive person!

The thirty year-old youth, who felt that Han Li seemed somewhat familiar, thought for a moment; He suddenly seemed to recall something and immediately turned towards the tall, skinny man, yelling at him with anger and fright, "Second Brother, what are you trying to do? Are you trying to purposefully enrage this Senior and cause him to kill all of us in his anger?"

As soon as this sentence left his mouth, even Han Li was slightly shocked, not to mention the dark-faced elder and the young woman; he had no idea why this youth would say these things.

In an instant, the Second Brother's face became incomparably pale and didn't say anything to defend himself.

"Fourth Brother, you're mad! How could Second Brother want us to die?" When the young woman heard this, she angrily defended the tall, thin man.

Then the woman turned her face toward the dark-faced old man to say something. However, she truly hadn't thought the old man would look so gloomy.

"Second Brother, is it because Third Sister still remains in their grasp that you thought to have everyone die so that Third Sister may live!?" The dark-faced old man coldly asked.

"Forgive me, Eldest Brother, but you of all people should know his methods. From the hidden meaning behind his words, Third Sister will be certain to suffer a hundred torments under his hand and live a life worse than death. It would be better to have one's soul fly away and be scattered than to suffer that fate!" The thin, tall Second Brother eventually explained with a face of shame.

When the young woman heard this, her face became incomparably pale. Her lips moved several times, but no words were able to come out.

"Humph, even if Third Sister is your Dao Companion, you actually have the nerve to use our three lives in exchange for her own?" The thirty year-old youth resentfully yelled at the second brother.

"Second Brother, although Fourth Brother speaks somewhat bluntly, he is not without reason! When we swore our oaths as sworn siblings that year, we promised that we would all live and die together. But now for your selfish ideas, you wanted to deliberately kill everyone. This is unjustifiable!" The dark-faced old man's voice was filled with disappointment.

“Correct! I wanted everyone to die but what other method do I have? My own flesh and blood is within Third Sister’s stomach. I can’t have my Li Clan become extinct here! Otherwise, who else would take the initiative to seek death? A wretched life is preferable to a good death!”

As his expression alternated between red and white, the thin, tall man couldn’t help but yell this with gripped fists.

These words immediately caused the old man and the young woman to be slightly stunned and reveal shock. For a moment, they actually didn’t know what to say.

The woman had her mouth wide open with an expression of complete shock.

“Are you all finished? If you are, then I will speak!” Han Li, who had been detachedly observing from the start, suddenly said this in a cold voice.

When they heard this, the three were immediately startled, and they suddenly recalled that the one who was actually in charge of their lives was actually the Foundation Establishment cultivator before them.

Their resentment immediately disappeared without a trace, and they once again looked at each other in dismay.

“I don’t care if you are all seeking death or if you’re putting on a play! I only want information on those behind the scenes. If you truly want to die, you will only be able to do so after you tell me information. Did you still think that you had control over your life and death?” Han Li’s emotionless words caused the four’s complexions to greatly change.

“We don’t know much of what you want. Furthermore, we have a blood curse restriction on our bodies. We aren’t able to leak any important affairs to outsiders, else we would immediately activate the restriction and our hearts would rupture.” The dark-faced old man gritted his teeth and then said this. He seemed to have already given up.

“Blood curse? That’s a bit interesting. Let me inspect it!” Han Li grew very curious and said this with some interest.

When the dark-faced old man heard this, his spirit slightly shook. After some hesitation, he took the initiative to walk forward and extend his arm, holding onto a thread of hope.

He had hopes that Han Li would be able to remove the calamity hidden within him. However, he felt these hopes weren’t very likely.

Those who put the blood curse on them were extraordinarily confident that no cultivator with a blood curse would divulge their secrets. Those who divulged secrets, regardless of whether it was deliberate or not, would die on the spot.

At this moment, Han Li grabbed his wrist and slowly circulated spiritual power through the old man's body. At this moment, his expression changed and became incomparably respectful.

The other three of the Five Friends of Meng Mountain stared at the two with great attention. They hoped this expert Han Li would truly be able to remove the blood curse.

After the time it took to make a cup of tea, Han Li let go of the old man's hand and lowered his head in contemplation.

After a short moment, he raised his head and asked the old man with an unchanged expression, "When they laid the curse on you, did they chant any strange incantations or say some strange words?"

Han Li's question caused the four to all reveal an appearance of shock mixed with a trace of happiness.

"They said...they said a few strange words we didn't understand. It seemed as if the incantation came from some sort of ancient dialect. We're certain we've never heard those words before. Also, it was a Foundation Establishment cultivator who laid the curse on us." Without waiting for the dark-faced old man to respond, the thin man excitedly replied first.

"Furthermore, after they finished these words, they took a bowl of some unknown black blood and put a few peculiar pattern on all our arms. It is incapable of being washed off." The old man promptly added on. He then exposed his entire arm, revealing a

strange black and indistinct symbol.

After Han Li stepped forward and took a careful look, he nodded his head. Then he again lowered his head in thought.

Not long after, Han Li suddenly raised his head and mysteriously smiled toward them, saying, “I was right! It seems I figured out what this blood curse is!”

“Are Senior’s words true?” The dark-faced old man said, trembling. The other three didn’t dare to believe Han Li’s words.

This blood curse was like a sharp blade at their necks. They had no choice but to follow the orders they were given. If Han Li could truly remove the great danger that resided within their hearts, they would be able to recover their freedom and wouldn’t need to obey their captors any further.

“This so-called blood curse is actually a kind of oral curse! What created the restriction should be that strange incantation. It has absolutely nothing to do with the black blood mark drawn on your upper arm; that was only a deception!” Han Li indifferently explained. It appeared as if he was greatly prepared.

However, he inwardly sighed from the fluke.

Fortunately, back when he was looking for information on the Greater Displacement Medallion, he had come across this oral curse technique in a very peculiar book. Otherwise, he wouldn’t

have known the slightest thing about it.

“Is it possible for Senior to remove the curse?” The young woman couldn’t help but ask.

“I don’t know.”

Han Li’s cold reply caused everyone’s heart to drop. The wild happiness they previously revealed was instantly deflated.

“What is the meaning of Senior’s words?” The dark-faced old man hastily wore a smile and carefully asked this.

At this moment, with the curse removal lying in Han Li’s hands, he didn’t dare to offend Han Li in the slightest.

“There are two methods for removing an oral curse. One method is by knowing the curse’s dispel chant. So long as I have the chant in my hands, I can read it aloud with spiritual power and safely break it. The other method is to use my spiritual awareness to enter your spiritual awareness sea and forcefully wipe away traces of the oral curse. This method requires the spiritual awareness of the one removing it to be greater than the one who cast it. In this way, the imprint can be removed. But if I fail, the oral curse will be triggered. You should clearly know what would happen afterwards,” Han Li wrinkled his brow and said this harshly.

“What! It can activate on its own?” The young woman couldn’t help but cry out.

The person who placed the curse on them had used a living person to demonstrate what would happen after the blood curse was activated.

That scene she witnessed, seeing that person spit out chunks of his heart in a miserable fashion, was still fresh in her memory. It caused her to feel fear from the mere mention of the blood curse.

The other's faces were also unsightly. How could they possibly gamble with their lives?

Han Li looked at them and then coldly laughed. When he thought to say something, the thin and tall Second Brother bravely raised his head and said, "Senior, please remove my curse! The same person put blood curses on all of us. If you can remove mine, then you are certain to remove all the others as well!"

These words caused the other three to open their eyes in surprise and blankly look at him.

"Second Brother, what are you doing? This is far too dangerous." After the woman regained her bearing, she hastily persuaded them with anxiety.